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THE JERUSALEM POST

VOLUME LXII, NUMBER 18839

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1994 • TEVET 10, 5755 • RAJAB 10, 1415

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NIS 4.20 (EILAT NIS 3.60)

Ramon, Shohat urge quick solution to dispute over package deal

JOSE ROSENFELD
 and MICHAEL YUDELMAN

IN the first formal meeting last night between Histadrut Chairman Haim Ramon and Finance Minister Avraham Shohat on next year's cost of living wage adjustment pact, both sides emphasized the importance of concluding negotiations as soon as possible.

On the table was the Treasury's proposal to cut wage earners' cost of living adjustment by 2 percent against a 1.4% reduction in the health tax, and the Histadrut's comprehensive social economic pact that includes updating the minimum wage, reducing the work week and inflation protection.

It was agreed that a joint professional staff will this week review the impact of the Treasury's plan on special groups, including the self-employed and retirees. This will be followed next week by intensive negotiations between the sides.

Both Shohat and Ramon said it is necessary to achieve quick results to prevent further inflationary pressures.

Shohat was joined by Ramon in his rejection of Histadrut Trade Union Section Chairman Amir Peretz's proposal to delay implementation of the plan until August 1995.

Shohat said the government will not be involved in all the issues related to the Histadrut's demands. Shortening the work week will be an issue to be settled between employers and the Histadrut, while updating the minimum wage will be discussed between the government and the Histadrut.

Ramon reiterated the Histadrut's demand for a socio-economic pact among the government, Histadrut, and the employers as a condition to renouncing part of the cost of living raise.

The socio-economic pact proposed by the Histadrut includes updating the minimum wage, reducing weekly work hours from 45 to 42, and adding a credit point (*nekudat zikui*) to working women to compensate them for the higher health tax they would be paying.

Ramon also demanded that the employers also take part in the negotiations. The talks are to continue next week.

Meanwhile, the Finance Ministry may decide to reduce the health tax, due to come into effect on January 1, even without a package deal, Histadrut sources said last night before the opening of the negotiations.

Woman's headless body discovered outside Efrat

BILL HUTMAN

THE naked and decapitated body of a woman, her arms and legs tied, was found just outside Efrat yesterday, police said.

Investigators believe the body is of an Arab woman, 40, from Beit Jalla, reported missing on Saturday. Family members identified a ring on the dead woman's hand, a police spokesman said.

The spokesman said it remains unclear what was behind the apparent murder and mutilation.

Israel Radio reported last night that two suspects had been arrested.

The body was found at about 3 p.m. by a tractor driver. It had apparently been thrown there from a car driving on an adjoining dirt road several hours earlier, the spokesman said.

The body was sent to the Forensics Institute at Abu Kabir for autopsy.



IDF soldiers take a comrade from a helicopter to a Kiryat Shmona field hospital yesterday after he was wounded by stepping on a land mine in the security zone. (AP)

2 soldiers wounded by mine in Lebanon

DAVID RUDGE

TWO IDF soldiers were wounded when an old mine exploded on the outskirts of Marjayoun in the security zone yesterday.

The incident occurred while troops were carrying out searches near the site of Sunday's Hizbullah ambush of a Golani Brigade patrol.

Lt. Ariel Ovadia, 21, of Jerusalem, was killed in the Hizbullah attack, and seven other soldiers were wounded, five of them lightly. Ovadia's funeral is expected to be held at the Mt. Herzl Military Cemetery in Jerusalem later today.

Military sources said the mine in yesterday's incident, of French manufacture, had been in the area for many years, and the incident was not related to the ambush.

OC Northern Command Maj.-Gen. Amiram Levine and senior officers were in the vicinity when the blast occurred, but were unhurt.

The mine itself was planted behind the wall of a cemetery in Marjayoun not far from the scene of Sunday's clash.

One of the soldiers involved in the searches climbed over the stone wall into the cemetery and trod on the old mine, detonating it. He was moderately wounded and another soldier nearby was lightly hurt.

They were both treated in the field before being evacuated by helicopter to Haifa's Rambam Hospital.

Two other soldiers are being treated there who were

wounded in Sunday's incident. One has eye injuries and the other is suffering from shrapnel wounds to the chest and abdomen. They both underwent surgery and were in satisfactory condition yesterday.

The inquiry by the Northern Command into Sunday's incident found that the Golani soldiers involved had acted in exemplary fashion.

According to the findings, the patrol was ambushed from a distance of less than 40 meters, when the gunmen opened fire with anti-tank and automatic weapons.

Ovadia was fatally wounded in the initial burst of fire, but still managed to order his troops to charge before succumbing.

The soldiers returned fire and charged the ambushers, killing two on the spot, despite the fact that seven of the Golani troops were themselves wounded.

The two other terrorists managed to flee but were quickly tracked down by the Golani soldiers and reinforcements within 400 meters of the scene of the attack, the inquiry found.

The soldiers opened fire and hurled grenades at the two remaining terrorists, killing them.

Hizbullah, in statements carried in the Lebanese press yesterday, maintained that its fighters were not killed by the soldiers they had ambushed, but

in subsequent search operations in which tanks, helicopters, and warplanes took part.

"This epic battle in the heart of the enemy's war machine headquarters in Marjayoun, so close to Metulla, is yet more proof of our determination to liberate our land," the Hizbullah statement said.

Hassan Khuballa, head of Hizbullah's fighting arm, the Islamic Resistance, in south Lebanon, said Hizbullah was determined to "eradicate what is left of the South Lebanese Army."

Hizbullah continued its attacks in the zone yesterday, with long-range firing at SLA and IDF targets in the Talousa region in the central sector, and around Rashaf village, in the western region.

There were no casualties among IDF or SLA troops, who returned fire in both cases.

Senior IDF sources noted that Hizbullah's successes were not as great as the recent heavy losses suffered by the IDF and the SLA might indicate. They noted that 104 terrorists had been killed in Lebanon since the beginning of the year, while 17 IDF soldiers had fallen during the same period.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, speaking in Tokyo yesterday, said in response to Levine's statement on Sunday on the need for more direct action by the IDF against

Hizbullah, that he will decide on the matter when there is a clear target. But Rabin pointed out that IDF initiatives in the past have led to Hizbullah attacks on Jewish targets in Buenos Aires and London.

Former foreign minister Likud MK David Levy yesterday charged that the latest wave of Hizbullah attacks requires a radical reappraisal.

He called for Rabin to cut short his visit to the Far East and to return immediately to Israel to deal with what Levy described as the deteriorating situation in southern Lebanon.

Plans disclosed to build Jewish housing on expropriated Arab land

BILL HUTMAN

PLANS for massive Jewish housing construction between the new Shuafat Ridge neighborhood and the Atarot industrial zone in northern Jerusalem have been formulated by the municipality, according to City Hall sources.

The area, annexed in 1967, is one of the largest pieces of undeveloped land in the city. Last summer, the 6,000 dunams (1,500 acres) of land were barred for development by residents of adjoining Shuafat and Beit Hanina.

At the time, it was charged that the city planned to expropriate the land, as it had done with areas to the east on which the neighborhoods of Pisgat Ze'ev and Neveh Ya'acov were built.

The plan, a map of which was obtained by *The Jerusalem Post*, appears to confirm these fears.

"You know what a sandwich is? That's what's going to happen here. The Arab neighborhoods will be sandwiched by Jewish neighborhoods," said one

source. He noted that the municipality has prevented the growth of Arab neighborhoods in other areas by building Jewish neighborhoods adjacent to them.

The map, compiled for the municipality by leading Jerusalem planner Yoram Gadish, shows the land taken out of jurisdiction of the two Arab neighborhoods as rezoned to allow for construction, but does not specify that it is to be used exclusively for Jewish development.

But the municipal sources said that the intent was clearly for Jewish development, largely housing.

"This doesn't surprise me at all," said Beit Hanina community council chairman Mohammed Masri. "We all expected this to happen when we saw that they not only prevented us from building on the land, but also took it out of our jurisdiction."

"We are already being choked

on the west by Pisgat Ze'ev, now we are going to be choked from the other side," he said.

Outgoing city engineer Gadi Brandes declined to comment on the plan. He said he was not personally aware of it, but that it may have been considered by other officials.

The municipal sources also emphasized that the plan has yet to be adopted by City Hall, although its placement in city records means it is being taken seriously.

The start of construction, even if the plan is accepted, would take some time, the sources added. A lengthy rezoning process would be needed, and the government would have to initiate expropriation measures, as some of the land is owned by Arabs.

Such a process, however, is not unprecedented, with work expected to begin soon on the south Jerusalem neighborhood of Har Homa, on rezoned land largely expropriated from Arabs.

Labor discusses future of capital gains tax

DAN IZENBERG

THE Labor Knesset faction yesterday held a stormy meeting about attempts to suspend the implementation of the capital gains tax, due to go into effect January 1.

In an emotional speech, Finance Minister Avraham Shohat said the issue of going ahead with the controversial reform "is a test of the

government's consistency and of the principles of the Labor Party, a test of whether it is a party of [popularity] ratings, a test of its credibility and its credo."

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told reporters on the way to Japan that he would not comment on the

capital gains tax while he was abroad, but when he returned he would have his say, Israel Radio reported.

"When I return to Israel, then I'll have my say. I have an opinion on the matter, but I have no intention of saying anything from here," he said.

Full story, Page 8

Arafat slams PM's proposal to leave IDF in voting areas

News agencies
 STOCKHOLM

PLO leader Yasser Arafat said yesterday he was astonished that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had proposed leaving Israeli troops in West Bank towns during elections.

The comment from Rabin, on a plane from Oslo to Tokyo, blew into the open an issue that had simmered behind the scenes over the weekend, as Arafat, Rabin, and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres accepted the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize in Norway, Palestinian sources said.

"I am astonished, because no one can accept to carry on an election in the presence of the occupying power," Arafat told a news conference.

"We have yet to reach a clear answer and the clarifications will continue," Rabin said. "What we must decide ... is are we going at this stage to enter into negotiations on the whole arrangement, or are we going to find a solution to advance elections without the thing requiring the withdrawal from the population centers?"

Palestinian officials and Arafat himself were said to be furious that Rabin had gone public with his suggestion.

Peres said he was not aware of Rabin's comments on Israel Radio and declined to discuss the subject during a news conference with Arafat and Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson.

"Finally we shall succeed, but let's not treat the beginning of the negotiations as though they were the end," he said, adding Israel is interested in enabling Palestinians to have elections at the earliest possible date.

Palestinian officials said Israel had put the controversial suggestion forward at meetings in Oslo, but they had flatly rejected it.

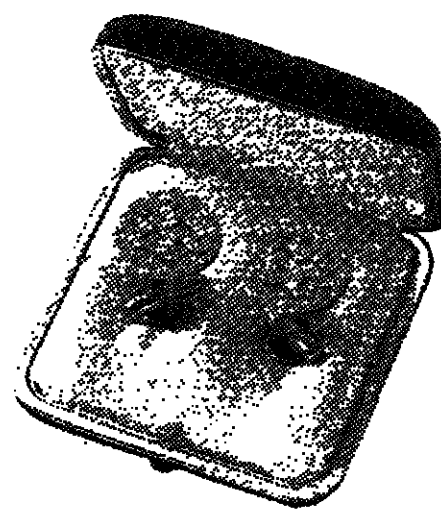
Peres and Arafat ended four days of talks yesterday without any new agreement, but said they are determined to resolve their differences.

Peres told reporters they were grappling with ways to bridge the Palestinians' need for "dignity and freedom" and Israel's need for security.

"Poverty is today the main enemy of peace," Peres said, adding that the next year or two "may be the most difficult years" for the Palestinian people because of their bleak economic situation.

Peres and Arafat were scheduled to leave Stockholm late last night.

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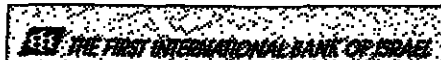
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A SAFRA BANK

Security forces on maximum alert for terror attacks

ALON PINKAS and RAINE MARCUS

THE General Security Service yesterday warned that extremist Palestinian organizations may carry out terror attacks in the next several days in Israel and against Israelis in the administered territories.

The attacks would be timed to mark a number of dates, such as the seventh anniversary of the beginning of the intifada and the founding of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine Day tomorrow, they said.

Security sources said such alerts are issued before every significant date the Palestinians observe, but Palestinian groups opposed to the peace process may also try to carry out attacks to disrupt the process.

Central District police announced a full alert yesterday fol-

lowing the GSS warning. All vacations have been canceled and police will work 12-hour shifts. Police in other areas will also work longer shifts and are on high alert.

Police also plan to beef up forces to prevent unauthorized entry of Arabs from the territories via unmarked paths.

Massive numbers of Civil Guard volunteers will be asked to help regular, border and traffic police, and there will be ongoing patrols along main highways and side roads.

Police are planning a massive campaign over the next few days during which thousands of vehicles and drivers will be examined and their documents checked. Arabs from the territories often use stolen vehicles.



Prime Ministers Tomiichi Murayama and Yitzhak Rabin review an honor guard yesterday during a ceremony at the Akasaka state guest house in Tokyo. (AP)

Israel, Japan expand ties

News agencies

TOKYO - Japan and Israel signed agreements yesterday on expanding cultural and scientific exchanges, as Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin began an historic visit as the first Israeli prime minister to come to Japan.

Speaking to reporters on the plane to Tokyo, Rabin emphasized the importance of investments in helping the peace process.

"It is very important that ... the leaders of the countries which are involved in the peace process will be encouraged by financial assistance, by investments. Not just the Palestinians, also the Jordanians," he said in comments broadcast by Israel Radio.

In his first meeting with the Japanese premier, Rabin said that terrorism continues to pose a serious obstacle to lasting peace in the Middle East.

Rabin was quoted as saying Israel would fight acts of terrorism, while at the same promoting the Middle East peace process.

A senior Japanese Foreign Ministry official, who attended the talks, said Rabin spent a significant part of the meeting explaining the situation in the Middle East.

Rabin met Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama shortly after he arrived in Tokyo at the start of a busy, five-day schedule taking in Japan and South Korea.

Rabin asked for Japan's assistance in building a dam on the Yarmouk River.

He also requested Japan's help through its ties with the Arab world, in finding the whereabouts of Israeli MIAs.

After the talks, Rabin signed two agreements, one on cultural exchanges and the other on cooperation in science and technology.

The visit marks a new era in ties between Israel and the Far East, which in the past have been tenuous.

Israel wants to expand trade with Japan, which Elhanan Harel, head of the Israel-Japan Chamber of Commerce, described as "Israel's second most important economic target, after the United States."

Exports to Japan rose 18 percent in the first nine months of 1994 to \$681 million. Imports fell 14 percent to \$690 million, mainly because of the expensive yen, Harel said.

As a sign of the importance it places on the area, Tokyo has pledged a total of about \$200 million towards the start-up costs of Palestinian self-rule, of which roughly half has already been supplied.

Rabin is scheduled to meet leading members of the Japanese government, including Finance Minister Masayoshi Takemura and Defense Agency chief Tokuchiro Tamazawa. He will also meet Japanese business leaders.

He leaves for Seoul tomorrow.

El Al seeks Tokyo routes, Page 8

PA may seek extradition of killer of activist's wife

Suspects arrested in Abed killing

JON IMMANUEL

THE Palestinian Authority may demand the extradition of those who early yesterday shot dead the wife of a Fatah activist, who was probably the target of a revenge attack.

Ibrahim Amru, 27, escaped with minor injuries when the gunmen fired into a window of his home. He had lived there only three days with his wife Rasmia, 24, whom he married on Friday.

Amru, from Dura near Hebron, was convicted of murdering fellow villager Idris Akel during the intifada, after suspecting him of being a collaborator. He decided to marry Rasmia, also from Dura, and to settle down in Jericho where he was pledged to remain under the conditions of his release last June.

Amru's wedding drew many visitors from Dura and the location of his new home was therefore common knowledge.

Jericho preventive security chief Col. Jibril Rajoub, also from Dura, said the PA would demand the extradition of the killer if he is now outside Jericho or Gaza. "This should be coordinated with the Israelis. We have an agreement that allows extradition, and it should be respected," he said.

Israel has demanded the extradition of several Gazans accused of killing Israelis and is waiting for the PA to respond.

Though the prime suspects are the Akel family, Rajoub said he had reached no conclusions.

Rajoub has warned families of murdered Palestinians not to seek revenge against the released killers of their relatives. Revenge attacks have been feared in Jericho, since many convicted killers were released into PA custody.

In Gaza yesterday, police said they recently arrested three self-confessed collaborators who planted the car bomb which

killed Islamic Jihad activist Hani Abed on November 2. Identified as Sharif Sheheba, Walid Siam, and Maher Elajab, they were said to have admitted being hired by Israeli security services. A fourth man is still being sought.

Israel demanded the extradition of Abed after he was suspected of ordering the drive-by shooting of soldiers Moshe Bukhra and Erez Ben-Baruch near the Erez checkpoint on May 20. Gaza preventive security arrested him, but he was released 17 days later for lack of evidence, Gaza police said.

In a continuing crackdown on suspected Islamic radicals, Israel's security forces arrested Jamil Salim, one of the senior Hamas activists in Nablus, a man widely considered a moderate in Hamas circles.

Nayef Rajoub, the younger brother of Jericho's security chief and imam of Dura's central mosque, was arrested two days ago. Both he and Salim were among the 400 banished to south Lebanon last year.

Sources in Dura said Nayef Rajoub was sent to Ketziot for six months' administrative detention. Nayef's twin brother, Yasser, was arrested two months ago on suspicion of being connected with Hamas and is still in jail.

Islamic sources said that the arrests of respected political and religious leaders is causing resentment among rank-and-file Hamas supporters, who say they have as much to do with attacks on Israelis as the activists arrested by Gaza police and released after a few days.

Meanwhile, Col. Rajoub last night denied reports that the IDF restricted him to Jericho following an incident between his men and soldiers at the Ouja checkpoint last weekend. "This problem has been resolved," he said.

Generals to talk with Syrians

ALON PINKAS, HILLEL KUTTLER and news agencies

ISRAEL and Syria will dispatch generals to Washington for talks when and if negotiations between the two countries resume, diplomatic sources in Jerusalem said last night.

The sources confirmed reports from Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's entourage, according to which US Secretary of State Warren Christopher secured in his last shuttle trip both Israeli and Syrian consent to begin discussions in two weeks on security arrangements as part of a possible comprehensive agreement.

The officers, to be sent as experts, will be major-generals, a senior army source said. The source indicated that the likely candidate will be OC Planning Branch Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan, and that he may be joined by OC Intelligence Branch Maj.-Gen. Uri Saguy, if the latter does not retire.

According to unconfirmed reports, in Washington last month, an Israeli major-general participated in a meeting between Israeli Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich and his Syrian counterpart, Walid Mualem.

In Washington, a US official said the new round of talks is not considered a breakthrough.

"I wouldn't draw a major distinction, frankly, between what

we've been doing and what we're doing now," a US official said yesterday about the upcoming talks. "I wouldn't portray it as something that betokens any kind of serious breakthrough."

The understated, trilateral format has been in place for a number of months. Israeli officials said here they now expect the two ambassadors to be joined by military officers "to speak about security arrangements."

The negotiations are expected to begin in the next few weeks. The US official said, however, that no announcement will be made when meetings are held, in order to lessen public attention on them. He also would not confirm that the negotiations would now include military figures, saying only the talks "may be supplemented, as appropriate, at various times, but nothing is fixed as yet."

Until now, Syria has been reluctant to expand the format or to hold formal one-on-one talks, which were last held in February. "We are not resuming the bilateral negotiations, because we still don't feel we're at the point where that would be produc-

tive," the US official said. Meanwhile, a radio report from Damascus said yesterday that Syria and Lebanon will not relinquish any of their territory held by Israel and will not lease any of that land as Jordan has done.

The broadcast appeared to be aimed at staking out Damascus's position in advance of the new round of contacts, ending a 10-month deadlock in their peace negotiations.

It also came the day after Syrian President Hafez Assad and Lebanese President Elias Hrawi held six hours of closed-door talks on the Middle East peace process.

A communique issued after Sunday's summit said the two leaders discussed "in depth" the negotiations with Israel. They agreed to continue coordinating their negotiating positions and not to sign separate treaties with Israel.

The radio said yesterday that Syria was not responsible for the obstacles that have emerged in the peace talks and suggested that Israel has always sought "ceremonial festivals" and fragile agreements in an effort to legitimize its aggression against the Arabs and keep Arab land under occupation.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Soldiers kill infiltrator

IDF soldiers shot at seven Gazans who tried to break through the border fence into Israel near Nahal Oz early yesterday. One infiltrator died after being badly wounded, the IDF said.

The troops on patrol opened fire believing the seven were armed and planning to attack. All of them escaped back into Gaza except for Abdel Matawa, 22, who collapsed wounded into a large puddle and may have died from drowning rather than from his wounds.

PFLP, DFLP to increase cooperation

The Lebanese daily *As-Safir* reported yesterday that George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Naif Hawatmeh's Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine had agreed to raise the level of cooperation between their organizations.

The newspaper said the two groups were uniting their military units and political departments, and they expected this move to "reinforce Palestinian opposition" to the peace process.

Edri begged police to relieve himself

Lt. Oren Edri writhed in pain for an hour and begged on his knees to be allowed to use a bathroom, but a police officer refused to allow him to get out of the vehicle he was being transported in and do so.

Only after Edri almost made in his pants was he allowed to get out of the vehicle and relieve himself, a police investigator testified yesterday at Edri's trial.

Edri is charged in Central Command military court with illegally removing weapons from the IDF, providing intelligence information and conduct unbecoming an officer.

Supt. David Papour also testified that Edri was not allowed to put on tefillin in the morning, explaining "tefillin can be put on until nightfall."

Winning cards

In yesterday's Mifal Hapayis daily Chance card draw, the lucky cards were the ace of spades, eight of hearts, ace of diamonds, and ace of clubs.

Pilot survives light plane crash

A light plane crashed near the Megiddo airstrip yesterday shortly after take-off. The pilot, Shlomo Ahdut, 54, was taken to Ha'emek Hospital in Afula with light-to-moderate injuries. The cause of the crash is under investigation.

Barak visits Petra

A group of Israeli tourists last week spotted Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Ehud Barak and his daughter visiting Petra with a Jordanian officer. They filmed Barak and the videotape was screened on *Mabat* last night.

Barak, in civilian clothes, was wearing a keffiyeh.

Discharged Soldiers Law effective January 1

The Absorption of Discharged Soldiers Law will go into effect on January 1. The law will apply to all soldiers honorably discharged who have completed at least 12 months of compulsory service since January 1, 1994, or those discharged for health reasons after serving less time. It will entitle them to a demobilization grant, academic studies assistance, vocational training, and aid in housing and setting up businesses.

However, soldiers will no longer enjoy income tax benefits and their unemployment entitlement will be limited to 70 days, as opposed to the current 138.

I regret to announce the death of my dear husband

Dr. HEINZ SKOMLINSKI ז"ל

For time and place of the funeral, please phone 04-371329

The mourners:

Wife, Margaret Skomlinski and Family in Israel and abroad

Salma Fuad Dajani and Family

mourn the passing of a distinguished and dear friend
Dr. LOTTE SALZBERGER

wife of the late Dr. Maccabi Salzberger, and daughter-in-law of the late Dr. Mordechai Salzberger, who was closely associated with my late father, Dr. Fuad Dajani, founder and director of the Dajani Hospital in Jaffa.

We extend our deepest condolences to the Salzberger family. May they find comfort in her many good works.

The Sephardi Communities Department of the World Zionist Organization

expresses its condolences to

Josette Woliner

on the passing of her father

ELIAHU BEN-HAMOU ז"ל



AMIT WOMEN

expresses genuine sorrow at the passing of a dear friend

Rabbi BENJAMIN

MORGENSTERN ז"ל

and extends sincerest condolences to the family:

Wife: Sylvia; Sisters: Molly Belenken, Evelyn Schreiber Children, Grandchildren and Great-grandchildren

המקום ירחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים
Shoshanna Rick Dr. Ami Ze'evi Mrs. Norma Holzer
Chmn. Israel Executive Director General National President

The Rabbinical Council of America - Israel Region deeply regrets the passing of their past President

Rabbi Dr. BENJAMIN

MORGENSTERN

He will be sorely missed

The Rabbinical Council of America - Israel Region
Rabbi Zalman Sharfman - President
Rabbi Naftali Hollander - Director

Memorial Service for

MIRIAM L. GAFNI ז"ל

Sunday, December 18, 1994 (15 Tevet 5755), at 7:00 p.m.

Karmiel Cultural Center Auditorium

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Bus transportation will be available, leaving from the

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Likud - Jerusalem
English - Speaking Section

invites the public to a talk by:
MK Benny Begin

"The Oslo Process - The Failure"

Wednesday, December 14, 8 PM
Club Scoop, Mesilat Yesharim St.

Namir: Force the homeless to accept shelter

LABOR and Social Affairs Minister Ora Namir yesterday instructed social workers to locate homeless people and put them into shelters where they can get treatment, even against their will.

Namir said that the people she was referring to "are mostly alcoholics who cannot help themselves. I know that it is important to obey the law, but preserving human life in cases of those who cannot help themselves comes first."

The number of homeless people located and treated by the ministry's welfare workers

reached 460 last year, and at least twice as many are expected to be treated this winter. However, nobody knows how many homeless persons there really are, as many of them - especially those whose lives are in danger - evade the authorities and any attempt to find them shelter or give them treatment.

Each winter the media produce bleak reports of the plight of homeless people who are either forced out of their homes or have chosen to take to the streets and live there. Last week a Bnei Brak homeless man was found dead.

MICHAEL YUDELMAN

Head of the ministry's slum rehabilitation department Shlomo Medina said yesterday he is aware of the conflict between forced treatment and human rights, but "We find people in grave danger, whose situation is close to death, because the authorities cannot force them to accept help which would save their lives."

Namir noted that she would act to speed up legislation to force help and treatment onto homeless people, as proposed by MK

David Mena, but until such a bill takes effect will take upon herself full responsibility for her unprecedented and controversial directive.

"I am not prepared to be a witness every week or two to the death of a person, in most cases an alcoholic whose identity is known to the social workers in his district and who systematically refuses treatment, thus bringing about his own death," she said.

Namir added that, in many cases, "[homeless] people come for treatment and then run away from the hostel. Perhaps we will

have to lock them up in the rooms where they get the treatment ... When disaster occurs and one of these homeless people dies, the whole country is in an uproar."

"When I entered office almost two years ago, I started concentrating on this problem. The social workers are doing an exceptional job, but despite all the efforts some of these people - alcoholics - refuse to stay in those apartments which we, together with the housing, health, and absorption ministries put them in for treatment, and die in the street."

Piranha may have invaded Kinneret

DAVID RUDGE

EXPERTS are examining whether a type of fish pulled from Lake Kinneret in the past few days is a species of piranha.

The carnivorous fish is normally found in warm waters in South America, but there is a suspicion that several of them may have been thrown into the lake by people who had kept them as pets.

The matter came to light when Tiberias fisherman Ovadia Daddon found a strange catch in his net a few days ago. Daddon said he had been fishing for St. Peter's Fish, but caught a small but vicious-looking fish.

"It was a strange-looking fish and unknown to me. I took one home and tried it, and it was very tasty. It had a mouth full of dirty, pointed teeth, so I didn't play around with it when I took it from the net," he said.

He caught two of the fish, and sent one to the Agriculture Ministry's fisheries department for examination.

An official at the department said yesterday it appears the fish is a piranha, although the specimen would be sent to the Hebrew University's zoology department for further study.

Meanwhile, fisherman have caught three more of the fish, one of which was put on the market in Tiberias and the other two sent to the fisheries department for examination.

Experts noted there are 12 known species of piranha, not all of which are as vicious as those popularly portrayed.



Beit Shemesh Mayor Daniel Vaknin (right) and 'Jerusalem Post' president and publisher Yehuda Levy last night present Malhi Amsili with a scholarship from the Jerusalem Post Welcome Home Fund. Ten scholarships worth NIS 35,000 were presented to young residents of Beit Shemesh by the fund. In the next two weeks a further 30 scholarships will be presented to residents of Rahat, Haifa, and Jerusalem. (Isaac Harari)

Grandmother held for kidnapping grandson

DAVID RUDGE

A HAIFA grandmother, suspected of kidnapping her eight-year-old grandson in Florida bringing him back to Israel, has been arrested.

Superintendent Rafi Roumy, of the Haifa police, said she had been questioned, and the boy had been returned to his mother.

Roumy said it had not yet been decided whether legal action would be taken against her.

The saga began four years ago, when the boy's parents decided to settle in America. They lived in Florida, but later the couple split up. The husband stayed there and the wife returned with the boy to live with her

mother, 54, in Haifa.

According to police, the couple decided to try and renew their relationship a year ago, and the mother went back to Florida to live with her ex-husband, leaving their son in the care of the grandmother.

Police said that in March, the grandmother and the youngster traveled to Florida so the whole of the family could be reunited and the boy started school there.

The grandmother, however, told police the youngster had been unable to acclimate to the

school or social life in Florida. She said she went to his school last week and decided to bring him back to Israel, without informing her daughter or son-in-law.

When the boy's mother went to pick him up from school, she found him missing and reported the matter to the police in Florida. They in turn made inquiries and contacted the New York Police, who discovered that the youngster and his grandmother had boarded a flight for Israel.

The matter was reported to police in Haifa and the mother herself arrived and filed an official complaint.

Moscow mayor wants Jews to return to his city

BATSHEVA TSUR and Itim

"WE are doing all in our power to prevent the Jews of Moscow from leaving and are trying to get those who have left to come back," Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzkov said yesterday.

Speaking at a reception hosted for him by his Tel Aviv counterpart, Ronni Milo, Luzkov described the emigration of Russian Jews in the past five years as "a serious genetic blow to Russia."

In order to prevent more Jews from leaving, the Moscow Municipality is cooperating with Jewish religious and non-religious organizations in the city, Luzkov said. "We are opening schools and community centers where the Russian Jews will feel at home and be free to express themselves from the ethnic, philosophic, and social point of view," he added.

The Muscovite also called for increased business contacts be-

tween his city and Tel Aviv.

Milo also said he would like to further financial ties between the two cities. "We can contribute a great deal to each other in numerous fields," Milo said. "All of us would benefit from closer ties."

Asked whether Luzkov's approach is likely to affect aliyah, Zionist Forum deputy head Yuli Edelstein said: "Today we are in free competition [for the Jews] with other countries - including Russia. The only way to get prospective immigrants to choose to come here is to make Israel attractive both as a Jewish state and as a developed modern state. The classic approach that, if things are bad for the Jews, they will come here, is no longer relevant. Jewish institutions abroad, if they work properly, can assure Jewish continuity as well as providing preparation for aliyah. We no longer have to save emigres."

Israel, Palestinians holding environmental parley

LIAT COLLINS

DATA banks and the free flow of information are two of the most essential aspects of environmental protection, agreed the participants at a conference on "Our Shared Environment," organized by the Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information. The two-day conference, which started yesterday, is being held in Jerusalem.

"Data-sharing is not as easy as it sounds. It's not just a matter of declaring the will to share," warned Linda Whitaker of the Nature Reserves Authority. "It's also a matter of making sure the computers storing the information are compatible. Even within organizations this is sometimes problematic."

Jordanian and Palestinian participants also called for more data on subjects ranging from water quality to pesticides.

Conference director Robin Twite said Israel is at risk from a failure to enforce existing laws; overriding environmental legislation for perceived political imper-

atives; poor public standards of behavior; "and above all the rush, fueled by powerful vested interests, for more development, regardless of what this may do to the quality of life and whether it's sustainable in the long term."

"Palestinians are more concerned with their struggle for self-determination and attainment of greater rights to pursue the development course they choose than with contemplating 'better' or 'more appropriate' patterns of resource use, when they have little or no choice to begin with," said conference co-organizer Dr. Jad Isaac, director of the Applied Research Center of Jerusalem and head of the Palestinian Environment Protection Authority.

Meanwhile, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and the Palestinians are establishing a joint Eco-Peace Task Force to monitor the effects of increased development on the environment, Alon Tal, director

of the Israel Union for Environmental Defense (IUED), said yesterday. The idea was agreed upon at a meeting of environmental non-government organizations in Taba last week. A steering committee is expected to be established later this month.

The initiative follows the success of the Casablanca economic conference. "We need a common environmental response in the region to the increased pace of development expected from economic and commercial measures," said Gidon Bromberg, the IUED's representative.

Tal said one requirement would be for an environment impact statement for every project. "Decisions such as enlarging Akaba Airport to serve Eilat cannot be taken just based on economic considerations, without taking into account the environmental implications of laying down another airstrip in the middle of the Ein Avrona nature reserve," he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Murder suspect remanded

The Be'erotayim caravan site resident suspected of strangling his long-time girlfriend to death last week was remanded for 15 days yesterday by the Haifa Magistrate's Court.

"I ask for the death penalty because I killed her. I didn't mean to do it," Amos Tasma told the judge. The woman, a mother of five children, was found dead in her Kiryat Bialik apartment. Police said the suspect fled to his sister's apartment after the murder and tried to commit suicide. He was arrested in Rehovot's Kaplan Hospital where he was taken for treatment after the suicide attempt. Itim

Drug-sniffing dog nabs two at airport

A 44-year-old French citizen who was an official guest of the Foreign Ministry and works at the French Cultural Center was arrested Sunday afternoon at Ben-Gurion Airport when a drug-sniffing dog found a small amount of marijuana in his shaving kit. The man claimed the 3.77 grams of marijuana were for his personal use and he was released after his passport was confiscated.

An hour earlier, the same dog found four grams of hashish on a 56-year-old Israeli citizen who arrived from Amsterdam and was promptly arrested. Itim

Judges warn Deri witness to tell the truth

The judges in MK Aryeh Deri's fraud trial yesterday warned witness Haim Ba'adri to tell the truth, after he answered most questions by saying "I don't remember."

Ba'adri, the prosecution's 16th witness, completed his testimony yesterday. Prosecutor Yehoshua Resnick asked Ba'adri about a statement he signed authorizing him to buy a plot for Binayamin Sharabi. Ba'adri admitted signing the document, but said he could not remember what he had actually done on the man's behalf. Itim

Weizman launches Akim, Alut drive

President Ezer Weizman yesterday launched the annual campaign to raise money for Akim and Alut. He praised the unrelenting efforts of workers and volunteers of both organizations on behalf of retarded and autistic youngsters.

By the end of next year, 600 disadvantaged young people will find a home at special villages following the allocation by the Treasury of a special budget for this purpose, it was announced. Volunteers will tomorrow go from door to door to collect money for the two organizations.

Hit and run suspect arrested

A Jerusalem man has been detained by police in connection with a recent fatal hit-and-run accident in the city. The suspect, 24, was arrested Sunday after police received a tip as to his identity, and is to be remanded today in Jerusalem Magistrate's Court. He is suspected of killing Dr. Sahm Shikatzky, 87, last month.

Free Vanunu delegation here

"Mordechai Vanunu has been punished enough," Jacob Eckelstone, one of a seven-member delegation from the British Free Vanunu Committee, told a Tel Aviv press conference yesterday. The delegation arrived Saturday night for International Human Rights Day. Itim

Mozes vs Mozes - in court

Ze'ev Mozes yesterday asked the Tel Aviv District Court to order Arnon Mozes to honor an agreement the two signed in 1986, by which they would both serve as directors of the Yediot Aharonot Corporation. Ze'ev Mozes also asked the court to issue an order forbidding Arnon Mozes from voting against his appointment at the corporation's meeting on January 5. Itim

Free dental checks for kids

Some 800 dental clinics around the country are offering free checkups for children this week. The campaign, organized by the Israel Dental Association, is aimed at increasing public awareness of dental health and measures to prevent tooth decay. Youngsters should have their teeth brushed when the first milk teeth appear, and their first checkup should occur before they have a problem, says IDA chairman Dr. Yitzhak Chen.

Parents may get information about the location of free checkups by calling 03-5288054.

Asara Betevet fast marked today

Asara Betevet, the fast of the tenth of Tevet marking the day when Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem over 2,500 years ago, began this morning at daybreak. The 12-hour and 15-minute fast ends at 5:05 p.m.

The Chief Rabbinate, in the early days of the state, declared Asara Betevet the "General Kaddish Day," when the kaddish prayer is recited for Holocaust victims whose actual date of death is unknown.

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| HAHARON | Heichal Hatarbut | Thur. Dec. 22 | Box office 03-540595 |
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ILA official acquitted of bribery charges

RAINE MARCUS

EHUD Paz, Israel Lands Administration (ILA) treasurer for the Tel Aviv area, was acquitted by Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court yesterday of bribery and breach of trust charges.

The prosecution had charged that Paz helped garage owner Yisrael Levit settle a debt with the ILA by allowing him to pay just over a quarter of the sum he owed for leasing land.

According to the charge sheet, in 1990 Paz also helped Levit close a deal in which the latter leased an additional plot of land adjacent to the one he

was leasing.

In return, read the indictment, Levit gave Paz discounts on car service and maintenance for his and his wife's cars.

During the investigation Paz admitted to the offenses, but in court he pleaded not guilty.

In acquitting Paz, Judge Nira Lidsky said she had not gotten the impression the defendant was corrupt and she doubted he had criminal intentions.

His rash behavior in helping Levit should not be interpreted as criminal offenses and he did not knowingly accept bribes, she ruled.

Two suspects in lawyer's murder released

Jerusalem police have released two men arrested six weeks ago on suspicion of involvement in the murder of Jerusalem lawyer Shmuel Levinson. The suspects, residents of the Arab village of Anata, had their remands extended twice.

Levinson was murdered in his Rehavia apartment five months ago, presumably by robbers. Police said the suspects were not involved in the incident and they are investigating other leads. (Itim)

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US ad exec dies in apparent serial killing

A BOMBER who has killed one person and injured 23 others over the last 16 years appears to have struck again, this time killing an advertising executive with a mail bomb, the FBI said yesterday.

Thomas J. Mosser, 50, was killed in his kitchen in suburban North Caldwell when he opened a package addressed to him and delivered by the Postal Service, FBI agent Barry Mawn said.

No motive had been determined, but the FBI believes Mosser's death is linked to what it code-named the "Unabom" series of mail bombs sent to university professors and executives of airlines and computer companies in the United States, Mawn said.

"The components of the bomb, its construction, make us believe the bombs are linked," Mawn said, describing the one that killed Mosser as "extremely powerful."

He said he did not know where the package originated.

The FBI believes the person who has been making and sending the bombs is a white male in his 30s or 40s with a high school education.

According to a 1987 profile prepared by the FBI's Violent Criminal Apprehension Program, the killer puts "a considerable amount of time" into building his bombs and takes great pride in his work.

"Letters delivered in conjunction with two of the bombs were intelligently written and neatly typed," the profile said.

The bombs have been con-

DONNA DE LA CRUZ
NEWARK, N.J.

structed from match heads, nails, screws, towels, fishing line, glue, string, handmade switches, a barometer, metal, pipes, gunpowder and batteries, according to the FBI profile. Using homemade parts makes them harder to trace.

The FBI is offering a \$1 million reward for information.

Mosser's wife, Susan, received the package Friday but her husband did not open it until Saturday, Essex County Sheriff Armando Fontoura said.

Mrs. Mosser described the package as small, neatly wrapped and white. Mawn said it was the size of a videotape.

Mosser lived with his wife and two children, aged 13 years old and 15 months. They were all home at the time of the blast, along with a neighbor's child who was visiting. None of them were injured.

The package exploded in Mosser's hand and blew a large hole in the kitchen counter, filling the house with thick smoke. Mosser was recently promoted to general manager and executive vice president at Young and Rubicam Inc. in New York. Mawn did not know if Mosser's accounts were linked to any of the bomber's previous targets.

But in the two weeks before the bomb was sent, computer giant Xerox Corp. and Digital Equipment Corp. hired Young &

Rubicam. Mosser also had had numerous contacts with airlines and the airline industry. *The Star-Ledger of Newark* reported.

Another reason Mosser might have been targeted is because he was mentioned recently in a *New York Times* story, investigators told the newspaper.

At least three of the other victims, including two last year, were featured in *Times* stories describing them as leaders in their fields, the newspaper reported. A story on Mosser's promotion was published Dec. 5. The bomber sent a letter to the *Times* last year.

The first bombs in the case — called "Unabom" because early bombings targeted universities — were mailed in 1978, Mawn said. At least 14 bombings have been reported in Illinois, California, Utah, Tennessee, Michigan and Washington state.

The other death linked to the series occurred on Dec. 11, 1985, when a package exploded as Hugh Scrutton picked it up near his Sacramento, Calif., computer rental store.

Targets of other bombs have included a geneticist at the University of California-San Francisco and a computer scientist at Yale University.

Tracking down the suspect has been difficult because of a lack of evidence, Mawn said.

"He is very good at what he does, unfortunately," Mawn said. "And the bomb blows up a lot of evidence. We don't have a lot to go on." (AP)



Airport security officers frisk departing passengers at Manila's Ninoy Airport yesterday, reflecting tightened security after Sunday's explosion aboard a Philippine Airlines plane. Moslem fundamentalists claimed responsibility. (AP)

Japanese probe plane blast

NAHA, Japan (Reuters) — Japanese investigators said yesterday they were awaiting the arrival of their Filipino counterparts before beginning a probe into an explosion aboard a Philippine Airlines (PAL) flight that killed one passenger and injured several others on Sunday.

The announcement by investigators came after survivors recounted details of their ordeal and as doubts were being cast on claims that an extremist Filipino Moslem group had been responsible for the blast.

"The Philippine government plans to send investigators to Okinawa to investigate what caused the explosion," Yoshiro Nakatsuji, deputy director of the Ministry of Transport's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau, told a news conference at Naha Airport where the plane had been forced to land.

"Investigating the cause of the explosion is the responsibility of Filipino investigators, and we will just be assisting their work," including taking statements from Japanese passengers and perhaps asking for advice

from Japanese Airlines (JAL) safety officials. Under the International Civil Aviation Convention, Nakatsuji said, responsibility for investigating airline accidents lies with the country from which the plane departs.

In this case, PAL flight 434 was on its way from Manila to Tokyo via Cebu in the central Philippines with 293 passengers and crew aboard when the explosion ripped through the cabin.

Japanese engineer Haruki Ikegami, 26, was killed by the blast; six were injured.

Fire in China killed town's best students

BEIJING (AP) — A government official has been arrested and two others are under investigation for a theater fire in far northwest China that killed 325 people, most of them students, an official said yesterday.

Abuleiti Kader, deputy director of the Friendship Hotel theater, was arrested yesterday, said an information official in Karamay, about 2,600 km northwest of Beijing.

All exits but one were blocked when fire raged through the theater at the weekend, killing 288 of the city's best primary and middle school students who had been selected to attend a special performance, the government-run *Legal Daily* reported.

In addition, 130 people were injured, 72 of them seriously, it said.

The information official, who refused to give his name, said two other officials from the city's cultural center were being questioned.

He said they were indirectly responsible, but

could not explain.

He said nearly everyone in Karamay, an oil drilling city of 220,000 on the edge of the Gobi desert in Xinjiang province, knows a victim.

"We are all in mourning for all these people who died," he said.

The official said almost all the dead were buried in the city's new cemetery, which opened last year. "It's a big cemetery. They are very orderly buried, row after row," he said.

The *Legal Daily* gave this account of the fire: Flames broke out on the stage and engulfed the curtains. Within a minute, electricity went out and the smoky theater was plunged into darkness as students and teachers rushed for the exits and the fire spread rapidly.

Four exits were locked and could not be opened from the inside. At the main entrance, a metal security gate was pulled down over two of three doors, leaving only one door open.

Delors seen handing Right monopoly

JOHN FOLLAIN
PARIS

JACQUES Delors' bombshell decision to duck out of the 1995 presidential race has handed the French Right victory on a platter, paving the way for it to monopolize all levers of power, political commentators said yesterday.

The Socialists scrambled to kick-start the search for a candidate after the European Commission head, the front-runner in opinion polls, turned a deaf ear to their pleas and announced he would not stand next spring.

By contrast, conservatives struggled to stop Delors' withdrawal tempting too many hopefuls into the ring.

"Good-bye Delors, Ciao the Left, Hello Balladur-Chirac," headlined the daily *Le Parisien*.

Many on both the Left and the Right paid tribute to the dignified nature of Delors' decision and stressed it played into the hands of the main conservative hopefuls, Prime Minister Edouard Balladur and fellow-Gaullist Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac.

"Delors' non-candidacy is like a bucket of icy water on the heads

of a band of agitated people. It gives dignity to politics," said the left-wing *Liberation*.

In an interview with French TF1 television night watched by a record 9.4 million people, Delors, 69, said personal concerns and political worries that he would be unable to carry out campaign promises had convinced him not to run.

Delors' unannounced financial markets, with the franc weakening and bonds tumbling.

Financial analysts said investors were spooked by the sudden switch in the tone of the election campaign.

Instead of a race between Delors and Balladur, advocates of European integration and tight budget policies, they see a resurgence of nationalist challengers to Balladur on the Right.

Commentators wrote off the Left's chances in the April/May contest but cautioned against fu-

eling divisions in the Right.

"The Left will be out of it. It's going to be an internal affair for the Right. That's bad for the renewal of politics in France," political analyst Pascal Perrineau told Reuters.

"Without Delors, the Socialist party is naked. It has no program to put forward, and no candidate," said centrist Education Minister Francois Bayrou.

Socialist Party leader Henri Emmanuelli acknowledged the Socialists had a tough few months ahead of them.

"The Left faces a difficult period. We have lost our best player and so we have a difficult match to play," he said.

A January party congress is due to seek a candidate to the succession of Socialist President Francois Mitterrand in May, but prospects seem gloomy.

Party officials said Emmanuelli would make "concrete propos-

als" at a leadership meeting tomorrow, including a deadline for picking a candidate.

An opinion poll by TFI showed 67 percent of voters reckoned Delors' renunciation meant a rightist would win the Elysee Palace. Other polls have shown no one on the Left has a chance.

Most widely tipped as possible candidates were popular former culture minister Jack Lang, 55, ex-premier Pierre Mauroy, 66, and Emmanuelli, 49 — the latter two further on the left and right-wing centrist.

In typically understated fashion, Balladur would only say of Delors' pull-out: "To tell you the truth, I expected it."

Euphoria on the Right was muted by fears that Delors' decision would aggravate fratricidal rivalries in the absence of another credible left-wing candidate.

Balladur's center-right coalition swept to power in March 1993. Mitterrand has since lived an uneasy "cohabitation" with Balladur. (Reuters)

Couple commits suicide for charity

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The founders of a broadcasting school could have paid for all the health care they needed in their final years. Instead, Richard and Helen Brown chose suicide so they could leave their money to charity.

In recent months, Richard Brown, 79, was forced, because of arthritis and asthma, to use a wheelchair. Helen, 76, was suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

They had been married 53 years.

Letters began arriving in the mailboxes of their friends as the Browns' bodies were found in their Cadillac in the garage of their Florida home. Both died of carbon monoxide poisoning.

They left a fortune of more than \$10 million.

"We have no immediate family or heirs. In a sense, this legacy represents the final purpose of our lives," the Browns wrote.

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Former Mitterrand police aide kills self to escape bugging inquiry

PARIS (Reuters) — A former presidential aide who was being investigated in a wiretapping scandal has committed suicide, police said yesterday.

The dead man, Pierre-Yves Guezou, a retired officer in the paramilitary Gendarmerie police, was one of five former aides to President Francois Mitterrand suspected of tapping telephones.

"We can confirm that Guezou was found dead at his home. It was apparently suicide," a Gendarmerie spokesman said.

Guezou and four others were under investigation for illegalities dating back to the mid-1980s and apparently ordered from the Ely-

see presidential palace.

The four are suspected of some connection in wiretaps of journalists, politicians and actress Carole Bouquet by the palace's anti-terrorist unit between 1983 and 1986.

The wiretaps followed a previous scandal in which anti-terrorist officers who broke up a Paris-based ring of IRA nationalists in 1982 were found to have planted weapons in the homes of suspects to ensure heavier convictions.

Journalists who broke the weapons-planting story were tapped, justice sources said, to discover who was leaking information to the press.

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Another crisis looms for Major in by-election

LONDON (Reuters) - British Prime Minister John Major looked set for another painful week as two opinion polls suggested his Conservative Party would be trounced in a parliamentary by-election Thursday.

The polls in the English Midlands constituency of Dudley West put the opposition Labor Party vote at 63 to 65 percent against 23 percent at best for the Conservatives, who had a majority of 5,789 in the 1992 election.

Political analyst Chris Game of Birmingham University said the by-election had wide implications for the Conservatives, who have governed Britain for 15 years.

"I think it is a very significant seat because it has that middle England profile with lots of skilled workers - the sort Labor need to win back," he said.

Dudley is in the industrial heartland of Britain but the constituency, which excludes Dudley town, is not typical of the area. Twice as many people work in services as manufacturing.

The Conservatives have lost two local council seats to Labor recently in middle-class areas. Conservative by-election posters are conspicuous by their absence.

As serious campaigning for the parliamentary seat began at the end of November, the Conservatives were tearing themselves apart over providing extra money for the European Union budget.

The measure was passed only after Major's cabinet threatened, in a so-called suicide pact, to call an election if it was beaten.

Then, to the delight of Labor activists, the government was forced to scrap an unpopular increase in value-added tax on home fuel, raise interest rates and put up the duty on alcohol, cigarettes and petrol.

One Labor official took pity on Dudley West's Conservative candidate Graham Postles. "The cabinet's got a suicide pact and their candidate's been sent on a suicide mission," he said.

Postles has repeated the government line that the rate rise was necessary to ensure sustainable growth and job creation.

Voters took a different view, judging by surveys. But Labor was guarded in its reaction.

"We're obviously encouraged but bitter experience, in 1992 especially, teaches us not to put too much faith in opinion polls," said an agent of Dudley West's Labor candidate Ian Pearson.

OJ to take on DNA challenge

LOS ANGELES (AP) - O.J. Simpson is reportedly on the brink of a major change in his legal strategy.

After hiring a high-priced team of lawyers to challenge virtually every drop, strand and speck of evidence, the former football star has decided to abandon an effort to have genetic evidence - the heart of the prosecution's case - dismissed, CNN reported.

Instead, Simpson's lawyers will challenge the evidence in front of the jury, citing unidentified defense team sources.

Simpson's lawyers will file a motion seeking the cancellation of a hearing on whether DNA evidence may be introduced at the trial.

That could allow lawyers to begin opening statements in early January.

The report came as lawyers awaited a decision yesterday from Superior Court Judge Lance Ito on whether one of the members of the prosecution team must leave the case.

The defense has said that Deputy District Attorney Christopher Darden improperly gained access to information on Simpson in his role as head of the grand jury investigation of Simpson friend Al Cowlings.

Chechnya talks begin as Russian tanks roll

AS tanks and thousands of troops closed in on their capital yesterday in Russia's biggest military action since 1979, Chechen leaders began peace talks with Moscow over who will control the republic.

Representatives from Moscow met a Chechen delegation in Vladikavkaz, the North Ossetian capital. A Chechen opposition group was excluded at the regional government's insistence.

"We have come to find peaceful means of settling the conflict," the head of the Chechen delegation, Economics and Finance Minister Timaz Abubakarov, told reporters just before the session began.

Backed by jets and helicopters, a column of Russian troops and tanks resumed its move toward the Chechen capital Grozny, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported. The column, one of three which rolled into the region on Sunday, moved through the village of Goru-Gorsk and was only about 20 km north-

west of Grozny.

Forces loyal to the Chechnya government fired rockets on the advancing troops, killing two and wounding several, Interfax reported, citing an unnamed Russian government spokesman. Russians responded with helicopter attacks, destroying the rocket base, the report said.

Chechen forces held 48 Russians that they took prisoner on Sunday, Abubakarov said.

Earlier, the Chechen foreign minister had ruled out peace talks. But Abubakarov said Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev had agreed to negotiate because "Chechnya will never miss a chance to maintain peace."

Chechnya's hand was forced on Sunday when Russian tanks, paratroopers and infantry advanced from three sides on Grozny, 1,600 km southeast of Moscow.

The decision to dispatch as many as

CHRIS BIRD
GROZNY

40,000 troops was an enormous gamble for Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who has been criticized by both hawks and doves for his handling of the crisis.

Hundreds of hard-liners and communists demonstrated against him in Moscow and several dozen protesters held a similar rally in St. Petersburg.

Some moderates have suggested impeaching Yeltsin, and the president lashed out at his opponents yesterday, saying the Chechen crisis "demands an urgent solution."

"It is irresponsible to use the tragedy of the Chechen people, the pain of all Russia, for pre-election battles," Yeltsin told both houses of parliament.

Yeltsin will face even greater pressure if Russian troops become bogged down in fighting in Chechnya, but apparently

hopes to force the Chechens to make concessions at the bargaining table without resorting to full-scale war.

Yeltsin spokesman Vyacheslav Kostikov said later: "There will be no assault on Grozny." The president's office denied reports that Russian aircraft had bombed the Chechen capital Sunday.

Machine-gun fire could be heard on the outskirts of the city as panicked civilians fled Grozny.

In the Grozny suburb of Petropavlovskaya there was little sign of a promised Russian blockade.

"They say the Russians have encircled the city but we haven't seen any," said 30-year-old Lt. Alu Gaysumov, commander of a post loyal to Dudayev. The lieutenant watched his men stop and check cars in fog and heavy frost, a Colt .45-caliber pistol stuffed into his flak jacket.

"We heard some shooting last night, but all was quiet here."

Chechnya, located in the Caucasus Mountains of southern Russia, declared independence in 1991. Russia has refused to recognize the claim and has backed Chechen forces opposed to Dudayev, a former Soviet air force general. A mostly Moslem nation of 1.2 million people, Chechnya has a traditional warrior culture, notorious crime gangs and an abiding hatred of Russia.

The crisis in Chechnya has been building for months.

The two political parties closest to Yeltsin began discussing possible impeachment proceedings against him in the State Duma, the lower house of parliament. It was not clear if such an action would be legally possible.

At a peace rally before the meeting, lawmaker Sergei Yushenkov said Yeltsin should be impeached for "inflaming" ethnic conflict.

"I see no other way of stopping the president," he said. (AP)

Serbs open fire on UN troops

FIVE Bangladeshi UN troops were wounded, one critically, when their armored vehicle was hit in a besieged Moslem enclave in Bosnia by a shell apparently fired by rebel Serbs across the border in Croatia, the UN said.

"Our initial information is the attack came from the west RSK (Republic of Serb Krajina) positions," UN spokesman Thant Myint-U said.

The attack occurred in the government-held town of Velika Kladusa in the Bihac enclave, which has been under assault by rebel Moslems allied with Serb forces.

The attack was the second on the 1,200-strong Bangladeshi battalion, who were rushed into Bihac in October with few weapons and little equipment to replace a departing French contingent.

Earlier yesterday a UN spokesman reported an increase in sniper and missile fire directed at civilians in Sarajevo.

In Brussels, NATO military planners discussed plans yesterday to assemble the largest fighting force seen in Europe since the end of World War II for a possible evacuation of peacekeepers.

NATO's military committee met at the alliance's Brussels headquarters to discuss contributions from member states of men, air cover, communications and engineering back-up to extricate the peacekeeping mission in the event of its collapse.

"Supreme Allied Commander in Europe US General George Joulwan will spell out his exact needs," said a spokesman for the military committee.

The plans assume a pull-out in a hostile environment, making it an operation fraught with danger.

NATO officials are tightlipped about details of the pullout plans, expected to cover several possibilities, but say it would involve at least 30,000 men with huge logistical support. More than half would be American.

"We have no doubt that the forces which are needed will be made available... the idea is that it would be a NATO-led operation," said a NATO official.

There was continued fighting in the western part of Bihac and shelling around Velika Kladusa, UN spokesman Paul Risley said.

UN operations were facing a "very tense and very bleak" situation, Risley said in Zagreb.

"All our convoys are blocked, or their movement restricted," he said. The UN commander for Bosnia, Lt. Gen. Sir Michael Rose, was traveling to Bosnian Serb-held territory just outside Sarajevo yesterday to demand an end to the harassment.

Reports said shells hit embattled Bihac and the government-held cities of Tuzla and Zenica in central and northern Bosnia. (News agencies)



A Chechen freedom fighter, wearing traditional costume and holding his rifle ready, waits yesterday for the advancing Russians outside the presidential palace in Grozny. (AP)

Panel: Ferry 'Estonia' should be left on seabed

STOCKHOLM (Reuters) - The *Estonia* car ferry, lying on the Baltic seabed with 900 bodies entombed inside, should be left where it is and not salvaged, an advisory committee to the Swedish government said yesterday.

An ethics committee established by Stockholm after the September 28 disaster said in a report that the sunken car and passenger ferry should be permanently sealed to avoid criminals plundering the ship's wreckage.

Separately, a political source said the Swedish government's

decision on the ferry - due on Thursday - will probably rule in favor of leaving the ship and its victims on the seabed.

Such a decision will anger relatives of the disaster's victims, who have called on the Swedish government to salvage the ship or, at least, bring the bodies of victims back to the surface so that they can be buried.

The source, present at a meeting of political party leaders held to discuss the issue yesterday, said: "It seems highly unlikely that the government on Thursday

will decide to raise the *Estonia*."

The *Estonia* sank during a storm. Only 137 people survived and 94 bodies were recovered.

Accident investigators have said the bow door of the ferry broke off in the stormy seas and water flooded onto the ship's cavernous car deck, destabilizing the vessel and eventually capsizing it.

The advisory committee recommended that the *Estonia* should be somehow sealed. Officials said earlier the ship could be filled with sand.

Berlusconi faces political reckoning

ROME (Reuters) - Italy's non-stop crisis intensified yesterday with a key minister reading an apparent epitaph for Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's government and another shock resignation from the country's judiciary.

"One could envisage a different government, with a different leadership and a different majority," Interior Minister Roberto Maroni, a member of the Northern League, said in remarks quoted in leading newspapers.

His reference to an imminent political reckoning frightened nervous financial markets the day before Berlusconi is due to be questioned by magistrates in Milan in their inquiry against him for alleged corruption.

Worries that the government could fall soon pushed the Italian lira to a new record low of 1,040.00 to the German mark compared with a previous low of 1,038.40, dealers said.

The federalist League has been the most disruptive force in Berlusconi's ideologically-divided five-party coalition and ensures its majority in parliament.

It has demanded a review of the future of the stormy, seven-month-old alliance next month, after parliament has approved Italy's 1995 budget, and made clear it could jump ship.

Maroni himself, however, has been widely regarded as a moderate eager to keep the League in the current government.

He linked what he called an

"acceleration" on the path to a showdown to the dramatic resignation of Antonio Di Pietro, star magistrate on the "Clean Hands" investigation team and symbol of the anti-corruption drive.

Di Pietro quit last week saying his investigations had become the target of a political tug-of-war.

A fresh bombshell hit the judiciary yesterday with the resignation of Arnaldo Valente, the presiding judge of the first criminal section of the Court of Cassation.

He quit in a letter to President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, saying he had become the victim of a smear campaign since his court's ruling two weeks ago to strip the Clean Hands team of powers to prosecute Milanese tax police for alleged corruption.

The ruling was widely seen as a blow to the Milan team since the tax police probe is closely linked to the Berlusconi investigation.

"The fact is that this decision... did not please a certain group of colleagues and people close to them," sources quoted Valente's resignation letter as saying.

The reference appeared to be to Milan magistrates and their supporters and looked set to sharpen a clash not only between the government and magistrates but within the judiciary itself.

Berlusconi powered to political triumph from big business at general elections in March on promises to clean up Italy. He has accused magistrates of a political plot to bring him down.

Australian to stand trial for murdering 7 backpackers

SYDNEY (Reuters) - A court yesterday ordered Sydney roadworker Ivan Milat to stand trial for the murder of seven backpackers - five of them from Britain and Germany.

Magistrate Michael Price found Milat, 49, had a prima facie case to answer after an extensive 27-day committal hearing in Campbelltown Magistrates Court in southwest Sydney.

Price said it would be normal to publish reasons for his decision but the case was an exception.

"I do not, on this occasion, least any view which this court may be seen to have formed might be interpreted as findings and be perceived by the wider community as a judicial determination," Price told the court.

Milat, who says he is innocent, will go on trial in the New South Wales Supreme Court next year on nine charges - seven counts of murder, one of attempted murder and one of armed robbery.

Milat has been charged with murdering two Britons, three Germans and two Australians in the Belanglo State Forest, 100 km southwest of Sydney, between 1989 and 1992.

The seven were shot or stabbed

to death and buried in shallow bush graves.

The victims were: James Gibson and his girlfriend Deborah Everist, both 19; Germans Simone Schmid, 20, Gabor Neugebauer, 21, and Anja Habschied, 20; and Britons Caroline Clarke, 22, and Joanne Walters, 22.

Milat is also charged with attempting to murder and rob a 28-year-old English backpacker, identified only as "Victim A", near Belanglo in January 1990.

The backpacker deaths equal the number killed in Australia's worst previous serial murder case. In the mid-1970s, seven women were killed in South Australia by two young men.

Prosecutor Ian Lloyd said he expected Milat's trial to begin in the middle of 1995.

Milat's solicitor Andrew Boe said yesterday it was not possible for Milat to receive a fair trial because of the intense media attention.

"This is a very strong argument that untested allegations against citizens of this country should not receive the degree of publicity and have this overbearing impact on the minds of potential jurors," Boe said.

Republicans making big changes in Congress

ANALYSIS
DAVID ESPO

He made it clear he wasn't picking committee chairmen solely on seniority, perhaps the single biggest manifestation of his power.

Two key committees - Appropriations and Judiciary - will be led by men who would still be waiting if seniority had reigned. Strikingly, both panels will have a large say over elements of the Contract with America.

Under Republican rules, chairmen will be limited to three terms, their staffs cut by a third, and their ability to cast proxy votes will end.

Members will have to show up to vote, and, says Democratic Rep. Phil Sharp of Indiana, retiring after 10 terms, "when they get there, they'll begin to ask more questions."

Republicans also will do away with one of the House's oldest

and most cherished traditions: the right to alter *The Congressional Record* to expunge embarrassing comments.

Republicans have pledged openness in committee meetings, including expanded television coverage. They also intend to make *The Congressional Record* and all bills and amendments available through Internet.

Gingrich is expected to invite TV cameras into the speaker's daily press briefing, giving him a platform from which to joust with the White House.

The shift to a Republican majority will shrink the number of seats Democrats hold on all committees, and that will mean that incumbents will be forced to relinquish coveted spots.

If changes are made according to seniority, the seven Democrats losing Appropriations Committee seats will include two Hispanics and two women, including one black.

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Telephone: 315666, Telex 26121, Fax 389527. CIRCULATION - 315610. FAX 389017. ADVERTISING - 315608, 315637-40, Fax 388408. TEL. AVIV: 5 Rehov Hamasger, P.O. Box 28398 (61283) Telephone 6390333, Fax 6390277. HAIFA: 19 Nordan, Hader Hacamel, Telephone 627124. Published daily, except Saturday, in Jerusalem, Israel by The Palestine Post Ltd. Printed by The Jerusalem Post Press in Jerusalem. Registered at the G.P.O. © The Jerusalem Post 1994. Reproduction, or storage in a retrieval system, or any other form, is prohibited without permission. Editors: 1932-1955 GERSHON AGRON, 1955-1974 TED LURIE, 1974-1975 LEA BEN DOR, 1975-1989 ARI RATH and ERWIN FRENKEL, 1990-1992 N. DAVID GROSS

Loyalty and welfare

IN examining the dilemmas of the Arab population in Israel, it is often difficult to determine what came first: the manifestations of less-than-complete loyalty and rampant corruption in Arab communities, or government injustices which inevitably produce such manifestations.

In a perfect world, such a determination would be irrelevant. The government's attitude should be egalitarian, unaffected by political considerations. But the fact is that, ever since its birth, Israel has been in a state of war with Arab countries. And there has never been a time in which Israelis were not targets of Palestinian terrorism. With all the good will in the world, it has been impossible for the government to be completely evenhanded in its treatment of the Arab population.

Until recently, the distribution of smaller government subsidies to Arabs - the most concrete form of discrimination - were rationalized by the fact that most Israeli Arabs do not serve in the army. And by making only army veterans eligible for certain subsidies, the vast majority of Arabs were excluded from government support. But now the Labor government is abolishing these differences. As Alouph Hareven, co-director of the Association for the Advancement of Equal Opportunity "Sikkuy" has accurately put it, this government has done more for Israeli Arabs than any previous one.

Yet the Arab community's response has not been encouraging. Some of the most prominent

Israeli Arab leaders refuse to identify themselves with the state. Rejecting the appellation "Israeli Arabs," they call themselves Palestinians who happen to be citizens of the State of Israel. Some, including Arab members of the Knesset, totally identify with the Palestinian Authority, and offer themselves as mediators in the PLO-Hamas confrontation. How an independent Palestinian entity will affect their allegiance is something Israelis can only guess.

Not surprisingly, Israeli Arabs also brand as traitors Arabs who have cooperated with Israel in its fight against terrorism. That even after an agreement with the PLO has been signed, Israeli Arabs refuse to allow these "collaborators" to live in their neighborhoods in Nazareth, Tira, or Jaffa is a sad commentary on their loyalty to the State of Israel.

This does not mean that the government should not continue to devote energy and money to the Arab sector. It is unconscionable that 50,000 Arabs are still living in "unrecognized" communities, deprived of basic services like electricity and telephones and sometimes even running water and postal services.

The government, which on Sunday awarded recognition to Ein Hud on the Carmel, should put all these hamlets on the map, both literally and figuratively. The government's concern for the social and cultural welfare of Arab communities should not be linked to their politics. There is only one reason to establish total equality in Israel: it is the right thing to do.

Democratic tutorials

THERE was a time when the world sat up and took notice of summit meetings, especially during the Cold War. These days, they come so thick and fast that even journalists have little time to ponder one before heading for the next. In just one week there have been two summits on Europe, one for the Islamic states, and the one for American hemisphere nations which has just ended. It is difficult to see what most of them are achieving apart from reams of resolutions which are rarely read, let alone acted upon.

The Americas summit in Miami had the suspicious air of another talking shop, whose main achievement appears to be the unleashing of no less than 14 new summits on the world's conference centers. They will deal with such Miami-spawned subjects as the Partnership for Pollution Prevention, the Invigorating Society Program, and a White Helmets Emergency and Development Corps. The latter is a whole new organization - to parallel UN "blue helmets" - which Argentina has proposed to set up a corps of volunteers "to prevent, relieve, and rehabilitate technical, social, and development cooperation and reduce the effects of natural disasters."

One can almost hear the rain forests groaning at the prospects of the paper mountain that will be needed just to write it all down. Employment for summit bureaucrats must be assured well into the next century. Yet, despite the universal cynicism that greets these expensive junkets for highly-paid leaders and their ministers, perhaps

huge global problems need huge collective efforts to set objectives for their solution.

Thus, it is hard to find fault with the lofty ideals the Americas summit tackled. The 34 hemisphere leaders set the aim of establishing a free trade zone from the Arctic to the Antarctic by 2005, and agreed on measures to strengthen democracy, to educate their people, to fight corruption and to protect human rights.

Perhaps the most significant hard decision made was to bring Chile into the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), which the United States, Mexico, and Canada have already founded. The concept of free international trade pioneered by the European Union is now the unstoppable wave of the future. As the Europeans have proved, such organizations may be the only certain way to underpin democracy in an increasingly fragmented world.

The end of dictatorships in Greece, Spain, and Portugal was a direct result of encirclement and prodding by the neighboring democracies. The same process was already seen at work in Mexico's elections this year, and other unstable Latin American states may be drawn to permanent democracy by the free trade route. Cuba's exclusion from this week's summit - attended by every other leader in the region - should send the sharpest message possible to dictator Fidel Castro. The only pity is the example of Europe, Asia, and the Americas shows little sign of penetrating the world's greatest congregation of dictatorships - right here in the Middle East.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PEACE MUST BEGIN AT HOME

Sir, - I am a Beduin Arab who has lived in Israel all of my life. I want to know what has changed within Israel following this peace process? When I was young, walking to school over the hills from my village, a 15-km round trip, I stopped every day to look back at my white home among the green trees. To me it was a very beautiful sight. One day during school, I heard an explosion, and on my way home, when I reached the hill, I saw the trees around our house, but I couldn't see the house. As a child, I reasoned that the trees had grown very big that day. However, when I arrived home I saw that the army had demolished our house, and three others. (In 1964, we were in a military zone; now they send a bulldozer to demolish a home.) To this day, I do not know why. For eight years after that, we lived in a tent. I can never forget that experience, the shock of coming home and seeing my house turned to rubble.

Unfortunately, my experience is not isolated, but is shared by many in the unrecognized villages. Our land and homes have been seized and demolished by the government for decades, as if we do not exist. My father had 120 dunams of land which he bought and cultivated; now, without selling any of it, I have 20 dunams left. My father's land is fenced off from me, it was declared "rocky" and the government is planting trees there.

My father had been working to achieve recognition of our village then, and I am still working for that now, 30 years later, so such things cannot happen. But they still happen, for we are forbidden to improve our homes or build new ones. Nor can

we improve our roads, or get electricity. My children ask, "Why don't we have water or electricity or toilets or paved roads like our neighbors?" What can I tell them?

Peace must begin at home. How can the rulers make peace with enemies of war if they cannot make peace with their own citizens? I am a son of this country, a citizen of this democracy, yet I don't get the mere respect due a human being, much less fair and equal treatment. I wish to live here on my father's land, according to our traditions. I want to call Israel my home and live in peace. I want to teach my children to be good citizens, without resenting their government. But there are wounds in my people, and we are still waiting for peace. "They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace." (Jeremiah 6:14).

HUSSEIN FAOOR,
Chairman, Union of Local Associations of Unrecognized Villages
Nahif.

NOVA SCOTIA

Sir, - The article "US 5-year-olds play Nazis and Jews," (November 20) reports an incident that occurred near Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, "near Lunenburg."

The psychological assessment of the children that followed was reported from Halifax. The headline was visibly esthetic, i.e. well balanced, but when Nova Scotia became the 51st American state?

JUDITH YOEL

Ramat Menashe

FREEDOM OF TRANSPORTATION

Sir, - With regard to Herb Keinson's news report of November 18, "Meretz to keep capital street open to traffic," I would like to contribute a few first-hand observations of that inimitable political party's behavior on the holy Shabbat.

In his first paragraph, Keinson states that "traffic on Rehov Bar-Ilan... will likely be heavier than usual tonight, as Meretz activists plan to drive up and down the street to ensure it remains open [my emphasis] to traffic." The fact of the matter was that, from before the beginning of Shabbat until well after dark, a continuous double lane of horn-blowing vehicles kept Bar-Ilan blocked up so tightly that no emergency vehicle could have had access to the street.

Oman Yekutieli "want[s] to ensure freedom of transportation." His actions certainly backfired - regarding not only traffic, but common respect for other citizens' basic religious rights as well. A political body purportedly based on "ensuring" civil rights must seek out a path for doing so that is fair to all citizens.

Moreover, as I and my young son were on our way home from Shabbat prayers, we witnessed Meretz activists inciting homebound haredim into a brawl in front of anxiously waiting riot police.

Finally, on our way to synagogue at 5:30 Shabbat morning, we were greeted on Bar-Ilan by a single vehicle speeding at nearly 100 kph loudly honking all the way. Who is safeguarding my civil rights? Meretz? Ha!

DR. BEZALEL SCHENDOWICH
Jerusalem.



The spoilers of peace

LEFT-WING circles in Israel are perturbed. They feel that the local media, especially Israel TV's Channel 1, are playing up Hamas and the Islamic Jihad to such an extent that the public is getting a distorted picture of the situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

This serves the interests of the right, they argue. What we see and hear strengthens the stand of those who oppose the Oslo process, and creates strong doubts about the process in people who are willing to give it a chance, even among some erstwhile strong supporters.

Are the media guilty of exaggeration in allocating so much time and space to the rejectionist organizations? Both Hamas and the Islamic Jihad have certainly grown stronger since the Oslo agreement began to be implemented last May.

But there's something that no one really knows, not even the media. And that is whether this growing strength is a sign of the Palestinian masses' inherent opposition to an agreement based on compromise and coexistence (a natural consequence of their disappointment at not yet feeling any benefits of the fledgling peace), or whether it is the final spasm of the outdated rejectionist position which has led the Palestinians from one catastrophe to another.

WHICHEVER proposition proves correct, the media cannot be censured for its focus on Ha-

SUSAN HATTIS ROLE

mas and the Islamic Jihad. And a close examination of media coverage of events in the West Bank and Gaza Strip reveals much more balance than first impressions might suggest.

The problem is that the activities of those in opposition generally provide better photo opportunities and their statements make for catchier headlines than those of the governing authority (and that is as true of Israel as it is of the Palestinian Authority).

A Hamas demonstration at which an Israeli flag is burned and a "play" in which the late

portance of peace. It's also hardly surprising that an interview with a Hamas leader who talks in terms of "all or nothing" and states that the Jews will suffer the same fate as the Crusaders leaves a more lasting impression on the Jewish viewer or listener than an interview with a leading Palestinian Authority figure explaining the authority's difficulties in getting the economy in the Gaza Strip going, and in dealing with the Islamic groups' armed bands.

So what can Israelis eager to combat the ruinous influence of these groups on the peace process do? Rather than try to reduce local media coverage of Hamas and Islamic Jihad activities (a hopeless task, anyway), they should concentrate on trying to increase the exposure these organizations are given worldwide.

Back in December 1992, Israel was chastised internationally for deporting some Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists to Lebanon.

As the second anniversary of that deportation approaches, Israel should seek ways and means to familiarize those who condemn it (all undoubtedly staunch supporters of the peace process) with what the subjects of their humanitarian concern are saying and doing today.

The material necessary for a concerted information effort of this sort is easily obtainable in the archives of the written and electronic media.

The writer is a political scientist.

Bad thinking on Bosnia

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

NOW Newt Gingrich has lost his head over Bosnia too. He once took the hands-off view that Bosnia is a European problem. Now he not only sees it as an American problem, but he has a three-point program to solve it.

Step 1: Get the UN protection forces out of Bosnia. A nice idea that will then allow the US to wage war with great gusto, relieved of the worry of hitting UN soldier-hostages.

But a few questions intrude. Who feeds the starving and besieged in Srebrenica, Gorazde and the other Muslim enclaves after the British and French and other UN soldiers leave? Who keeps these enclaves from being overrun and their populations massacred? Who keeps CNN-rich Sarajevo alive when the UN leaves and water, power and food are cut off?

Answer: (a) No one, or (b) American ground troops. Take your pick.

Step 2: Arm the Muslims. Another nice idea, three years too late. Who is going to stop the Russians from flooding the Serbs with weapons once the arms embargo is broken?

Most important, what happens to the Muslims in the months it will take to arm and train them? The Serbs are certainly not going to sit idly by while their enemies are prepared for battle. They will launch a preemptive offensive that will cost thousands more lives and perhaps extinguish Bosnia for good. Who will prevent that?

Which brings us to Step 3: We will. Massive American air strikes - why, just the threat - will stop the Serbs cold. This faith in air power is touching considering that 40 days of intensive bombing could not get Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait; it took a ground invasion to do that. Yet Gingrich figures three to five days in Bosnia ought to do the trick.

Non-sense. Once the war is Americanized, the risks are exclusively the US's. Once it orders the UN, it assumes responsibility for the Bosnian civilians. Once it arms the Muslims, it assumes responsibility for the conduct of the war. And once it begins air strikes, it becomes a combatant. At which point, the US is back in Vietnam, 1964.

The Gingrich warpath isn't just bad foreign policy. It is bad domestic policy. It is never a good idea for Congress to run American foreign policy. It was not a

good idea when the Democratic Congress tried to shred Reagan's in the 1980s. It is not a good idea for the Republican Congress to stage-manage Clinton's today.

Regarding Central America in the '80s, the Democrats were simply trying to block an activist White House. The Republicans are more ambitious. They are trying to foist an activist Balkan policy on a passive administration. That is far more tricky and dangerous because, in the end, it is the executive that has to carry out the policy.

Do Americans want a war policy run by an administration that is both unwilling and incompetent to undertake it?

Apart from all else, it is bad politics. This whole venture into foreign policy is a huge, needless distraction for the Republicans. They were not elected on November 8 to save Bosnia, which is beyond saving. They were elected to fix America, which is, as yet, not beyond fixing.

Their mandate to govern was won on a domestic agenda. There is a window now open for the Republicans to enact it. To squander that opportunity on a foreign adventure that promises the country nothing but grief is simply crazy.

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POSTSCRIPTS

BRITAIN'S ROYAL Naval Hydrographic Department sent along a chap with a brown paper package to the BBC's Antiques Roadshow program recently. In it was an old map, and they wanted to know its value.

Clive Farahar, an antiques expert on the program, opened the package and said simply: "Oh my God."

The Navy had brought in Captain Cook's map of New Zealand. Value: £1 million.

Unkindest cut of all

KEVIN COWHERD

THE worst thing a man can do in front of women is talk about pain - especially if these women are of a certain age. At a party, my friend Bob made the mistake of mentioning that he'd recently had outpatient surgery on his knee. The knee, he said, was swollen and throbbing and quite painful.

Immediately, you could hear a few snickers. "You call that pain?" his wife Judy said.

Here we go, I thought. "I'll tell you what pain is, mister," Judy said. "Pain is 18 hours of someone-please-kill-me labor."

At this, the other women in the room seemed to perk up. Their eyes took on this strange, excited glow.

"Pain," said another woman, "is a baby the size of a footlocker inching down a birth canal with the circumference of a garden hose."

Still another woman said: "Pain is thrashing about in some godforsaken birthing room and feeling like your insides are being torn out by a team of oxen while the blood vessels in your eyes pop from all the strain."

By this point, of course, Bob was beginning to realize the full enormity of his error. He tried

Don't expect a woman to sympathize with male suffering

fleeing to another room. But there were four other men there, and we followed him into the hallway and began beating him about the head.

"What is the matter with you!" one guy yelled at Bob. "You know they're gonna bring up childbirth!" another guy said.

Clearly, the poor slob had forgotten Hanson's First Law of Suffering, named after my friend, Vince Hanson, which states:

1. There is no pain greater than childbirth.
2. Only women can experience childbirth.
3. Therefore, only women can experience real pain.

Women wave this around the way the Chinese once waved Mao's Little Red Book. Therefore, if you're a man, they have very little sympathy for your pain, unless your arm was severed in a combine accident.

And even then, most of these women would say: "Was it cut off at the shoulder or the elbow? 'Cause if it's the elbow, it's nothing compared to when I delivered little Jason."

This, of course, is why you never hear men discuss their vasectomies in front of women.

FOR THE RECORD, I myself have never had a vasectomy. I'm one of those people who prefers not to have anyone advance on his testicles with a hypodermic needle and scalpel.

In fact, I don't even like to talk about vasectomies. When other men bring up the subject of their vasectomies, the room starts spinning and I have to lie down.

The point is, a vasectomy seems like a fairly grim and uncomfortable procedure. So you'd think that a man who endures one should be able to parlay it into some real sympathy.

Which he can never do if the subject is broached in front of women.

Men, of course, love to talk to each other about their vasectomies.

They can become extremely animated ("Then they take this huge needle, okay? And they stick it right in your...")

Meanwhile, men who haven't had vasectomies will listen to these stories with great interest and compassion.

These men will wince and pull their knees together and say things like: "What, they just cut it? Like it's an onion or something?"

But as soon as a woman enters the room - that's the end of the vasectomy stories.

A man could be in mid-sentence - it could be the greatest vasectomy story ever told - and he'll clam up just like that.

Then he'll say something like: "Weatherman's calling for rain."

Because men know that this heroic story of pain and the limits of human endurance will not impress a woman.

To women who have endured childbirth, a vasectomy is like a paper cut.

It must be great to be able to say that.

Me, I've got to lie down for a while.

(Baltimore Sun)

ALBERTO Mizrahi's singing career started around the seder table in his native Athens.

When his grandfather recited from the Haggada, Mizrahi recalls, "people from around the neighborhood came out to listen."

Mizrahi followed the sound of his grandfather's voice into a cantorial career and, later, onto the operatic stage.

He is also following in the footsteps of fellow tenors Jan Peerce and Richard Tucker, who combined their operatic schedule with cantorial work.

"I feel like a dinosaur," says the 42-year-old singer from his home in Chicago, where he is

One tenor; two musical tracks

cantor of the 125-year-old Anshei Emet synagogue.

"There are not too many guys who still do that. It's very rare to keep walking the line between opera and hazanut."

Mizrahi's father, an Auschwitz survivor, moved the family to the US when Alberto was a child.

"We came to US for the opportunities of education and the Cleveland Jewish community took me over immediately. The Jewish community in America really works."

Two musical memories stick

with him from that time.

"As a child I heard a record of the famous cantor Yossele Rosenblatt and I said, 'This is something I want to do.' And when I was five my mother had an operation and so I went to the movies with my dad and we saw [Mario] Lanza as Caruso. I still feel the music in my stomach."

While he was captivated by both opera and cantorial music, Mizrahi basically stayed within the framework of Jewish liturgy.

"For many reasons I didn't feel I was good enough in opera, and

MICHAEL AJZENSTADT

if I can't be in the top I'd rather not do it at all. So I stayed with hazanut and it was good for me to do just the occasional opera and concert."

As part of the Classical Winter in Jerusalem series, Mizrahi will have ample opportunity to display both sides of his musical personality.

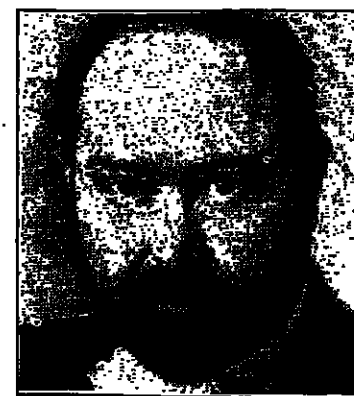
He used to subscribe to the theory that singing is singing no matter what the material, but now he thinks differently.

"Hazanut is Middle Eastern in sound, with nasality, and it's different from opera. It's actually a westernization of the sound of the *mizrah* [east]."

"In opera, the throat is open and full throughout, but not nasal. And I try to do my best so that my hazanut is not too operatic - like it used to be."

In the concert hall, Mizrahi tries to convey, as much as possible, the real essence of any cantorial piece he sings.

"The ideal is to feel it as a prayer, but it is sometimes diffi-



Mizrahi balances a career as cantor and opera singer.

cult to do it outside the synagogue. I choose things that I don't necessarily do in the syna-

gogue. For myself I pick pieces that are more concert-like in nature."

Mizrahi performs in the opening concert of the Liturgia concerts on December 24 in Jerusalem, singing the tenor role in Moam Sheriff's *Sephardic Passion*, and later performing several opera arias and cantorial songs with the orchestra under the baton of David Shalom.

On December 28, Mizrahi will feature in a cantorial concert at the Mann Auditorium in Tel Aviv, part of the Yuval cantorial concerts series.

On December 31, he is to sing a light program of popular Neapolitan songs and opera arias with the International Symphony Orchestra in Jerusalem.

Off-peak Dylan keeps his dignity

NEW RELEASES

TIRZAH AGASSI

A few years ago I read an anecdote by a music writer amazed by the realization that Bob Dylan was, to a young interviewee, just what Frank Sinatra was to the writer himself: a boring old man.

So how relevant is Bobby to the cross-generational zeitgeist as the nasty Nineties hit their midpoint?

We'll find out when we learn if the rumor that he is recording with Pearl Jam, Generation X's most effective desperadoes, is true.

The Seattle-based Pearl Jam is, of course, America's No. 1 alternative rock band, a multiplatinum act turned corporate trust-busters.

Furious about the exorbitant prices charged for tickets to their concerts, the band is suing Ticketron for alleged monopolistic price-fixing.

A band that can handle both psychedelics and realpolitik sounds like what the generation that hit puberty at the "dawning of the Age of Aquarius" had in mind before they turned around and joined the Silent Majority.

Rumor has it that the man they used to call "God" has chosen Pearl Jam to be his spiritual heirs, and this bodes well for Dylan.

In the meantime *Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits Volume 3* (NMC) has recently been released. It's a 14-song collection that spans the long stretch between '74 and '91 and includes a brand-new release called "Dignity."

It's not Dylan at his '60s peak, but it is a compilation that proves him to be much more than a boring old man. In fact, this is a damned good disc to keep on tap.

I personally missed plenty of the recordings from which these songs were selected, for example *Knocked Out and Loaded* from '86. But "Brownsville Girl," the

single that represents it here, is a welcome find.

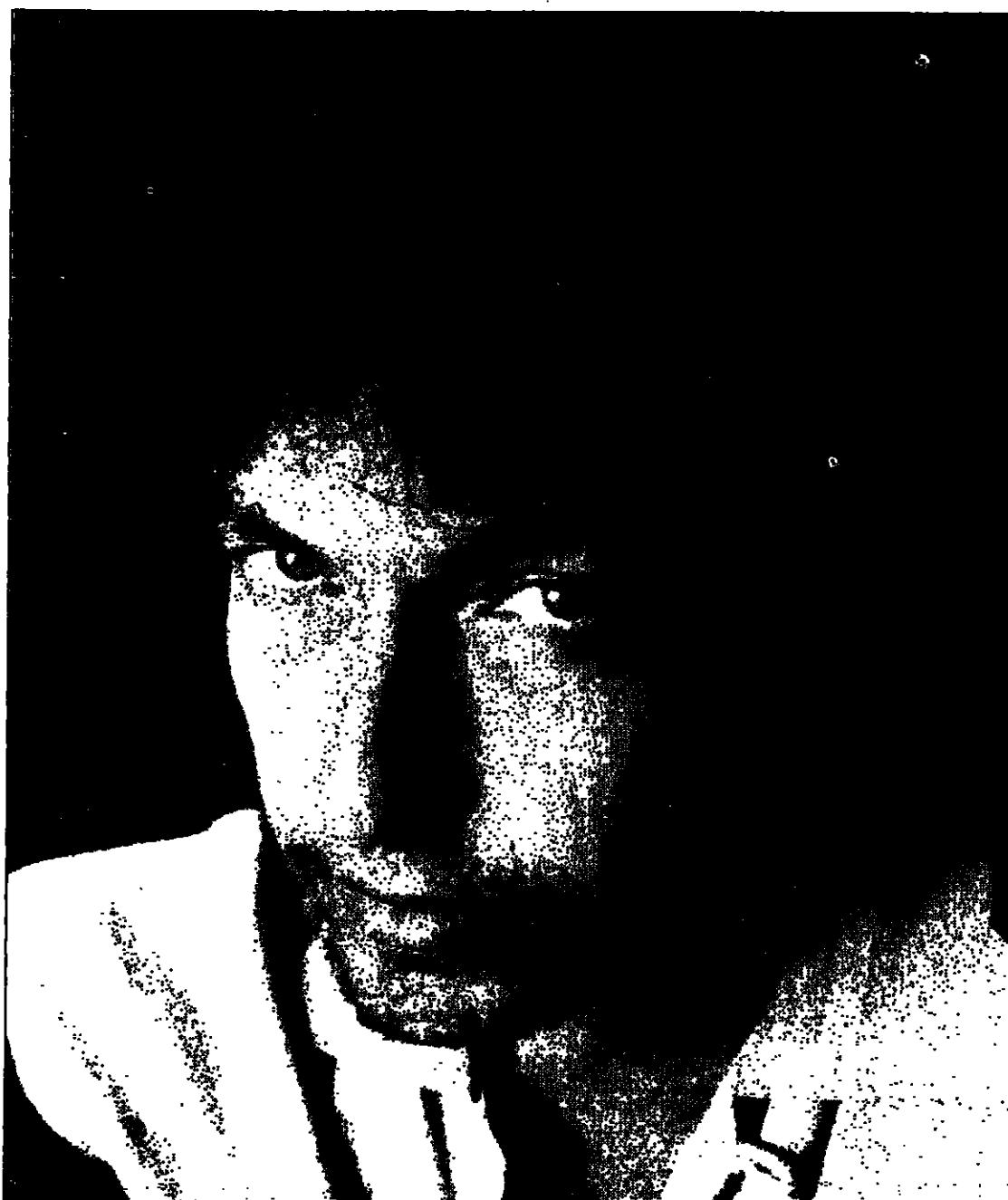
It's a 10-minute stream-of-consciousness meander that wanders out loud about the meaning of a certain Gregory Peck movie, the singer's love for a brown lady and the King and Queen of Swords from the tarot deck. As Dylan progresses in his efforts to somehow make sense of things he goes so far as to confess "if there's an original thought out there, I could sure use it now." I don't know about you, but I found this disarming.

Then, of course, there are great songs like "Tangled up in Blue," "Hurricane," "Joker Man" and "Gotta Serve Somebody." Dylan may be having a notoriously hard time fulfilling the role of a prophet who can transmit The Word. Nonetheless, aside from the late great Bob Marley, he's as good as it gets.

His new song, "Dignity," isn't great, but it is sincere and significant as it describes the struggle to find that precious commodity. And though his vocal on "Forever Young" may be remarkably flat, it's still a definitive song. As for the last track "Knockin' On Heaven's Door," anyone who can resist it is probably the kind of person who would have preferred Salieri to Mozart.

SOUTHERN rockers The Black Crowes are musical descendants of the Allman Brothers rather than Dylan, but they do have posters of both him and Marley up when they record. The cover of their new album *Amorica* (Hed Arzi) is rather alarming. It features a close-up of the crotch of a model wearing a star-spangled string bikini. Abundant, curly black pubic hair spills over the top.

For the first three songs I heard intelligent, lusty lyrics, a great



Dylan's new 14-track release proves he can be relevant to the cross-generational zeitgeist.

rhythm section and lead vocals by a fairly honest tomcat whose yowl didn't particularly turn me on. But on the fourth track, "Cursed Diamond," something happened. When Chris Robinson (who writes the songs together with his guitarist brother, Rich) offered up his mused-up self with the serenade "so unzip my pride/open me up wide" he flipped into greatness.

"Roll me in your splendor/I'll envy your surrender/And show you victory," is poetry that you don't need a college degree to understand, and the band that delivers it are not just sexist jerks. They probably even love their mothers.

The band deserves its multi-platinum sales record and its reputation as "The Most Rock'n'Roll Rock'n'Roll Band In The World." They are, quite simply, good. It's too bad that they are still adamant in their substance abuse and their allegiance to the

mystique of playing chicken with the Devil. But perhaps they'll outgrow this.

In the meantime, it's a pleasure to learn that they refuse corporate sponsorship (a decision which once got them thrown off a big tour when they were an opening act.) Every generation has its rebels who choose to die young. Then again, there are the ones who survive their motorcycle accidents, and grow up to really face the music.

Levine is less than divine in conventional program

THERE can be no doubt that James Levine is a musical giant, but the program he offered Saturday night - Mozart's No. 41 ("Jupiter") and Beethoven's Ninth - was somewhat of a disappointment.

Levine very seldom comes here, so when he does one expects a slightly less conventional bill. Perhaps because of this and the extremely fatiguing tour the IPO has just concluded, results were not quite as impressive as anticipated.

The Mozart was a pleasure: subdued sonorities despite the orchestra's size; an elegant tone, an interpretational structure which seemed, from the opening bars, to bear in mind the concluding passages, and a profoundness, especially in the *andante cantabile*, were all testimony to the conductor's greatness.

The Ninth, however, was merely a routine performance with woodwinds occasionally shaky, alternating passages between winds and strings not always integrated into a continuous flow and even the strings, especially in the divine third movement, displaying much less than their optimal capability.

The combined choirs - The Radio Romania Choir from Bucharest, the Israel Kibbutz Choir, and the Kibbutz Artzi Choir - were good or even very good. Three of the four soloists - baritone Eike Wilm Schulte, mezzo Jane Bunnell and soprano Deborah Voigt - were also impressive. Tenor Philip Crech should never have been given the part.

THE Israel Chamber Orchestra fluctuates between peaks and valleys. Heinrich Schiff was a unique peak, and now with Jean-Bernard Pommier as conductor and pianist, the orchestra has hit bottom.

From the beginning of this concert - Mendelssohn's inspired *Fair Melusina* overture - and

through Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1, in which Pommier was featured as soloist, to Faure's *Masques and Bergamasques*, and finally in Mozart's "Paris" Symphony No. 31, Pommier became the merciless executioner.

In all these pieces, Pommier demonstrated incredible aggressiveness and a loud, harsh and unpleasant sound.

Intonation was also far from perfect, especially that of the strings which were often shaky. As pianist, Pommier also never really cared about technical perfection and many of his passages were sloppy.

Tel Aviv Museum, December 4. Benjamin Bar-Am

A NEW work by Sergiu Natra, Sonata for Four Harps (Natalie Glaser, Irena Kessler, Efrat Lavri, Julia Sverdlov), was given its world premiere at the opening concert of the 12th International Harp Contest in Israel Saturday.

A different tuning for each harp turned out to be an ingenious device, not as a modernist gimmick but to elicit chromatic progressions that are impossible on the single harp.

Almost three years later, the first prize winner of the previous harp contest, Marie-Pierre Langlamet, proved in her recital that she indeed deserved that trophy. An uncommon degree of subtlety, extremely delicate dynamic nuances, coupled with an understated yet finely polished flowing technique, impart a distinct personal note to her playing. Flutist Aurele Nicolet added a touch of consummate maturity when he joined the harp for a Bach sonata, insisting wisely on a slower-paced tempo in the opening fast movement than the harp would have it.

Jerusalem Theater, December 10. Ury Eppstein

THE accumulative effect of all four American composers - Copland, Barber, Bernstein and Gershwin - in the Jerusalem

CONCERT ROUNDUP

Symphony Orchestra's Subscription Concert No. 2 amounted to rather too much of a good thing.

The closer the music comes to the operatic idiom, the more Sharon Rostorf, soprano, seems to feel in her own element. Her often audible and always visible natural charm, enhanced by her considerable manipulative skills, was therefore most persuasively displayed in the Bernstein songs from *Candide* and *West Side Story*.

In these she regained the audience's sympathy after a not quite so communicative rendition of Barber's *Knoxville*. Her endearingly sweet voice sounded best in the higher registers, where it had a chance of making itself heard. Canadian conductor Boris Brott made the orchestra sound uncommonly alert, eliciting from it jerky syncopations and glamorous instrumental colors.

Jerusalem Theater, December 8. Ury Eppstein

THE 21st Century Ensemble exercised remarkable restraint by advancing no further than the superannuated 20th century in its season's opening concert on December 4.

The highlight, in terms of musical content, was Israel's own Mordechai Seter in his Piano So-

nata. Its meditateness, intensifying very gradually to an overwhelming emotional climax, only to recede, arch-like, to meditateness though on a higher, spiritual and rarefied plane, set the work miles apart from the rest.

The work was admirably rendered by Ora Rotem-Nelken.

The common denominator of the first three works was Japan: Toru Takemitsu's *Rain Spell* (1982), Stravinsky's *Japanese Poems* (not more recent than 1912) and Paul Mefano's *Japanese Prints* (1992). Takemitsu's work abounds in subtle nuances, even of successive tones on the same pitch, in unaccustomed interplays of uncommon sonorities, and in nebulous, unfamiliar atmospheres.

Stravinsky's *Poems* sounded more like Stravinsky than like anything Japanese, and Mefano's *Prints* proceeded largely along the lines of customary avant-garde conventionalisms, except for the conciseness of the pieces, reminiscent of short Japanese haiku poems. Lily Tureh's soprano, bright-timbered and penetrating, sounded uncompromisingly European.

The Spanish Tomas Marco's *Divanes y Qasidas* were, likewise, steeped in Western modernisms more deeply than in Middle Eastern traditions, in spite of occasional arabesques and melisms.

CONCERT ROUNDUP

Epiaphium (1959) revealed an altogether more mature, less assertive Stravinsky than his youthful earlier piece.

The American Morton Feldman's *Madame Press Died Last Week at Ninety* was a wistful to obsessive piece, in spite of skillfully manipulated subtle sonorities, with its irritating incessant repeats of a cuckoo-call.

Directed by Baghdad-born Jewish conductor-composer Paul Mefano, active in Paris, the ensemble presented the extremely intricate works on a considerably high professional level.

Jerusalem Music Center, Mishkenot Sha'ananim, December 4. Ury Eppstein

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'Father' dearest

THEATER REVIEW

NAOMI DOUDAI

CONVERSATIONS WITH MY FATHER

By Herb Gardner. Hebrew, Dan Almagor. Direction. Hy Kahn. Set. Adrian Vaux. Costumes. G. Lahat and M. Mednik. Hebrew title, *Sihot im Avi*. Haifa Municipal and Beit Liessin Theaters.

Charlie Ami Weinberg
Josh Ide Musary
Eddie Sasson Gabai
Zaratsky Yanov Halpern
Gasta Hava Orman

This is one of those American Jewish comedies - *The Sisters Rosensweig* was another - that shrink and shrivel at the touch of Hebrew handling.

The scene, a saloon on Manhattan's Lower East Side; personae, a four-generation family of Russian-Jewish origin; time, scrambled from 1936 to 1976; theme, clash between the customs of the old country and the new.

The piece depends for its clout and credibility on an authentic realization of the Yiddish-American ethos. Yet even with at least one veteran Yiddish actor to spice it, a native American to direct it, a lively and at times hilarious text plus a faithfully reproduced set, the main thrust and the essential ambience of the play is far from achieved.

Fine actors like Roberto Polak, Ami Weinberg, Hanna River, and Hava Orman do their best with typecast characterizations but for the main part seem uncomfortable in, at times indif-

ferent to, their roles.

And no wonder, when they are so hopelessly upstaged or perhaps, as I was, plain paralyzed by Sasson Gabai's excessively obnoxious performance.

It is vexing to see Gabai, one of our most powerful actors, incongruously cast as Eddie, the Russian-born, would-be all-American father of the piece.

Overcompensating with an exhibition of frenzied overacting, he rages, rasps and rants all over the stage without any apparent restraint from the director.

The merciless manner in which he belts out his wrath reminded me of the old lady in the Cameri's recent production of Durrenmat's *Visit*.

Both are extreme examples of the local if-you-can't-play-it-shout-and-scream-it syndrome that bedevils our stage.

Whom to blame if not the director for allowing an actor of Gabai's caliber to expose himself to ridicule with such a pitiable presentation?

If he hoped that his explosive brio would compensate for the actor's remoteness, both physical and temperamental, from the Yiddish-American original, he was sadly mistaken.

Only the crudest caricature resulted. If the first part was mildly promising, by the second a play redolent with American-Yiddish humor, poignancy, and pathos was in ruins, or at any rate, in the doldrums.

Alienation in action

DANCE REVIEW

DORA SOWDEN

FOR the second program of the Frankfurt Ballet staged at the Tel Aviv Performing Arts Center (December 6), William Forsythe's *Alien A(c)tion* was a parallel to the first performance but more compact, somewhat more positive and with a brilliant ending.

The show scrambled about over benches and floor. It broke into frenzied movement or had the dancers lying or sitting about, but all with uncluttered precision.

In the first of three parts, an elderly man sat center stage, counting again and again up to 59 - to measure the minutes. He got little attention, though all around him dancers swung and flung themselves. A cheerleader or rehearsal director urged them on.

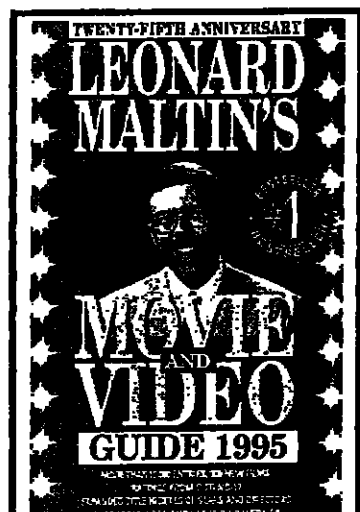
Between moments of bustle and pause, there were sudden vigorous solos and much ado with long benches, also used for sitting out and resting.

Yet all that was redeemed and apotheosized by the ineffably beautiful finale when more than 30 dancers lined up not only to show the strength of their unity

but also a style that changed Forsythe from a genius in search of a subject to a conjurer.

Correction:

In last Tuesday's dance review (December 6) two lines were omitted at the end. The final paragraph should have read: "In the fourth program, Ahuva Friedkas-Koren showed remarkable pliancy on, over, under and around a structure made up of three stout poles tied together. Anat Shamgar was accompanied by the reading of a text in Hebrew by Amos Hetz."



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BUSINESS & FINANCE

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1994

Shohat scorns attempts to shelve capital gains tax

DAN IZENBERG

FINANCE Minister Avraham Shohat yesterday said he represents the poor "a thousand times [better] than [Economics Minister Shimon] Shetreet with all his acrobatics," during a stormy Labor faction meeting over rumblings in the party to suspend implementation of the capital gains tax.

Although many of those who spoke expressed reservations about the law and claimed that it is highly unpopular, no one came out in support of Shetreet's call to shelve the tax for the foreseeable future.

The tax is due to go into effect on January 1.

In an emotional speech, Shohat said the issue of whether to go ahead with the controversial reform "is a test of the government's consistency and of the principles of the Labor Party, a test of whether it is a party of [popularity] ratings, a test of its credibility and its credo."

There is nothing wrong with scrutinizing a bill before it is passed, said Shohat. "However, it is an utter disgrace that after the law has passed and nothing else has changed in the meantime, now, for the sake of popularity and based on an incorrect reading of the polls, [they] put pressure on the party" to suspend the law.

Shohat warned that shelving

the law would set a negative precedent for other legislation. He said there is no reason to back away from the law, which is "just and which enables us to join the circle of Western nations, all of which have such a law."

Shohat said he is certain a majority of the nation supports the bill and charged that the flood of protest phone calls which poured into the Knesset on the night the capital gains tax was approved was orchestrated.

"There are no spontaneous phone calls at 3 a.m.," he said. One hundred people called in and expressed themselves using the exact same formula. It was an organized campaign. The Knesset cannot exist under such terrorism."

Shohat said he knows who organized the alleged campaign.

He lambasted Shetreet for proposing to shelve the law, saying the economics minister had favored taxing capital gains during the debates on the 1993 and 1994 fiscal budgets. Shohat described Shetreet's explanations of his change-of-mind as "acrobatics."

Shetreet said his opposition to the implementation of the law "was not personal," but based on electoral considerations. "We shouldn't be blind and bang our heads against the wall," said Shetreet. "A politician must have good instincts and reexamine his



Shetreet: Changed his mind due to electoral considerations. (Uzi Keren)

actions all the time."

He said he favors the law, but that "at this time and in these circumstances, there is no support for it so we will not be able to continue implementing it."

Shetreet said it took "courage and wisdom" on his part to reexamine the issue.

Transport Minister Yisrael Kessar and MKs Avi Yehezkel, Gedalya Gal, and Shmuel Avital spoke out against changing the law and said the faction should not even discuss it. Avital said anyone who favors changing it "is motivated by internal political considerations."



Shohat: Shelving tax would set a negative precedent for other legislation.

Nevertheless, MKs Shlomo Buhut and Ya'acov Sheli said the law is unpopular, while Eli Goldschmidt warned that the Labor government could fall over this tax, just as British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was ousted from power over the poll tax.

In a related development, Likud MK Ron Nahman is to submit his bill to abolish the capital gains tax to a vote in preliminary reading tomorrow. Nahman called on the coalition to allow its members to vote according to their consciences.

El Al seeks landing rights in Japan, Korea

HAIM SHAPIRO and news agencies

El Al officials hope that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's trip to Japan and South Korea this week will lead to the airline's obtaining landing rights in both countries.

Rabin, currently in Tokyo, is to discuss an aviation agreement with Japan. Until now, the Japanese have rejected El Al's bids to fly to Tokyo, mainly for security reasons.

"We expect the changes in the region to lead to a new Japanese position regarding landing rights," an airline spokesman said.

In Seoul later this week, Rabin

is due to sign an aviation agreement that would enable national carriers from both countries to operate commercial service.

El Al plans to begin flights to Seoul in February. In the past two years El Al has increased its Asian operations. It started serving Beijing in 1992, and has since added flights to Bangkok, Bombay and Hong Kong.

In a separate development, El Al said it is negotiating with General Electric's finance subsidiary

for financing to purchase two Boeing 747 cargo planes from Singapore Airlines.

The \$100 million deal is expected to be concluded within a few weeks, the spokesman said.

El Al is also expanding its air cargo service, expected to grow five percent to 7% this year.

In another development, the Interministerial Economic Committee authorized the recommendation of Transport Minister Yisrael Kessar to enable El Al to acquire 48 percent of the shares of the Dutch Star Line airlines at a cost of \$60,000.

Ayalon to be diverted for terminal

HAIM SHAPIRO

ISRAEL Airports Authority head Motti Debi yesterday announced the first major step in the construction of a new air terminal at Ben-Gurion Airport: diverting Nahal Ayalon at a cost of NIS 55 million.

Speaking at a meeting of the Knesset Economic Committee, Debi said the course of the stream bed would be diverted southward, so it would be nearer the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway. By doing so, he said, some 4,800 dunams (1,200 acres) would be freed for the new terminal, which is to be known as "Ben-Gurion 2000."

Debi also said that diverting the stream bed would improve the situation in the entire area,

which now suffers from periodic flooding.

He said that if the authority acquires the lands by the end of the first quarter of 1995, it could have the new terminal ready on schedule by mid-1998.

Transport Minister Yisrael Kessar described the situation in the present terminal as "catastrophic."

It is absolutely essential that the new terminal be completed and every possible shortcut is being considered, he said. The present terminal had been built for 3.5 million passengers a year, he noted, while a total of six million passengers is expected by the end

of this year. "The deteriorating service will deter passengers and tourism will suffer," Kessar told the committee.

Kessar also told the committee he has approved the building of 20 landing strips throughout the country, including the Galilee and the Negev, for scheduled air service and for air taxis.

MK Uzi Landau, who initiated the committee meeting, said he is concerned about hurrying a project of such great scope.

He suggested providing solutions within the framework of the present terminal which would solve the problem for the coming five years, so as to ease the feeling of urgency.

Minimum limits lifted on poultry distribution

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

EGG and poultry distributors will now be subject to new rules aimed at reducing middlemen's margins and increasing farmers' earnings.

Agriculture Minister Ya'acov Tsor yesterday decided to lift the minimum quantity limitations on egg and poultry distributors, which he said limits the number of distributors in the field.

Dalia Harel, deputy director-general of the ministry's production and economics division, said 11 egg and 12 poultry distributors operate in the country. Harel said the addition of more distributors is expected to increase com-

petition and reduce wholesale brokerage fees, about 25% of the price of an egg and 10% of poultry prices.

Distributors were previously required to market a minimum of 40 million eggs or 4,000 tons of fatted bird a year to receive distribution licenses.

The ministry said egg and poultry licenses will now be granted to distributors who can demonstrate an adequate sorting and storage ability.

Four years ago, the ministry implemented similar reforms in the distribution of fruit and vegetables.

Bank savings programs attract 23.6% more deposits in October

Post Business Staff

BANK savings programs attracted 23.6 percent more deposits last month than in October, the Treasury reported yesterday.

Following the stock market's fall investors have sought refuge in the safety of bank savings plans, which the banks have marketed aggressively. Deposits totaled NIS 524.4 million last month, the second highest figure this year after May.

As inflation soared in the past months, index-linked programs continued accumulating deposits, bringing in NIS 594.1 million in November. By contrast, a falling dollar resulted in withdrawals of NIS 69.7m. from foreign currency-linked savings plans last month. Since the start of the year, savings programs have attracted NIS 2.7 billion.

NIS 2.9m. in Heldstein's assets frozen

RAINE MARCUS

THE Tel Aviv District Court yesterday froze NIS 2.9 million in assets belonging to Ofer Heldstein, a manager at Bank Discount's securities department.

Tax authorities asked the court to freeze property valued at NIS 3.9 million, the amount Heldstein allegedly failed to declare in income over a two-year period.

Tax officials said they began examining Heldstein after the Securities Authority launched an investigation.

Heldstein was found to have allegedly concealed income he earned from other sources while working for Bank Discount.

According to officials, Heldstein, together with five other people, manipulated bonds and thus defrauded Bank Discount clients. Profits from these deals, said officials, were deposited into bank accounts registered in his name and into friends' and family members' accounts.

Tax authorities alleged that Heldstein only paid tax on earnings at Bank Discount, but failed to declare his other income. They also accused Heldstein of trying to smuggle assets abroad to avoid paying his dues.

Electric Corp. workers blast Shahal's efficiency plan

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

ISRAEL Electric Corp. workers yesterday came out against Energy Minister Moshe Shahal's planned reforms in the electricity sector, less than 48 hours after the minister announced them.

Shahal and Finance Minister Avraham Shohat plan to restructure the sector to increase efficiency and bring competition to a field dominated by the IEC. Shahal plans to bring his proposal for cabinet approval next week.

He proposes to break up the firm into smaller units, creating separate companies for the production and supply of electricity. Shahal also plans to allow private suppliers to operate in the marketplace to increase competition. The IEC workers committee yesterday said the reforms would result in poorer service to the disadvantaged. The workers object to Shahal's plans to break up the company into a few divisions.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Investment Center approves \$13.2 million in projects: The Industry and Trade Ministry's Investment Center yesterday approved 13 projects totaling \$13.2 million and canceled eight amounting to \$24m.

The center approved the \$5m. expansion of the Polyshek plant on Kibbutz Nir Yitzhak, which produces canvas and chains. The \$13m. project to build Hotel Dertan in Ein Bokek was canceled, as were projects to build industrial buildings in Jerusalem, Barkan, Migdal Ha'emek, and Mitzpe Ramon for \$7.7m.

Harish to sign MFN agreement in India: Industry and Trade Minister Micha Harish will travel to India next week to sign a most-favored-nation trade agreement and a pact to encourage industrial and economic cooperation between the two countries. The new trade status will result in the elimination of all trade barriers between the two countries.

Agriculture Ministry to build new complex: The Agriculture Ministry yesterday published a tender to build its new office complex in Beit Dagan, east of the Agriculture Research Center. The cost of the project is estimated at NIS 60 million.

The ministry said the sale of its property in the Kirya is expected to cover most of the investment. The ministry hopes the 12,000-sq.m. building will be ready for occupancy in about two years. Dan Carmel, in charge of the project, said the building will include the Agriculture Ministry and Water Commissioner's management offices.

Hachsharai Hayishuv to establish local motel chain: Hachsharai Hayishuv Hotels, a member of the Israel Land Development Co. Group, plans to establish a local motel chain in partnership with another investor. In an announcement to the stock exchange, Hachsharai Hayishuv said it plans to establish a subsidiary company to develop and operate the chain.

Menashe named chairman of Poalim Capital Markets: Uri Menashe, chairman and managing director of Cargil, was appointed chairman of Poalim Capital Markets, a subsidiary of Bank Hapoalim.

Magen demands Mivtahim return NIS 40m. to state

Post Business Staff

THE chairman of the Knesset State Control Committee, MK David Magen, yesterday demanded that the Finance and Absorption ministries seek the return of NIS 40 million the Mivtahim pension fund unjustly collected as management fees.

The money was collected as part of a retirement fund for older immigrants ineligible for pension rights. Mivtahim agreed to run a pension plan for the immigrants in return for deducting administrative fees. Funding for the plan was to come from money the immigrants amassed in provident funds turned over to Mivtahim for pension payments, and from Absorption Ministry funds.

However, Magen revealed that according to a report on the set-up discussed in the committee yesterday, all the pensions had been paid out of the Absorption Ministry budget since 1981, without Mivtahim crediting the pensioners' accounts with the funds received from the provident funds. This money was kept by Mivtahim as "management fees," and was never paid out.

During that entire period, the ministry never received reports from Mivtahim about the amount received for the pensioners, and how these funds were invested and what return was received, so there was no information avail-

able on the amount collected by Mivtahim.

According to the external auditor appointed by the Treasury and the Absorption Ministry, the sum that should have amassed in the pension plan from the immigrants' money is more than NIS 50m., which Mivtahim kept in "fees," leaving the ministry to pay the pensions.

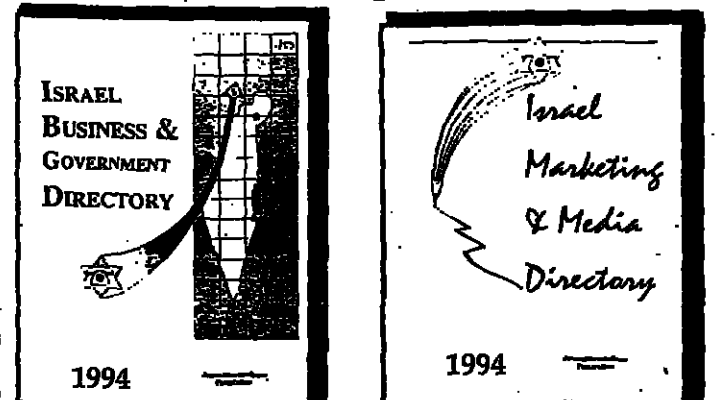
Absorption Ministry comptroller Pina Ben-Ze'ev and Magen's legal adviser Rina Gerbel said the matter had been submitted to an arbitrator, who ruled that Mivtahim should transfer NIS 37.9m. to the ministry.

Magen said he was satisfied with this arrangement, and asked the ministry to report to the committee when the funds were transferred, which is to be by the end of the month. Magen said that just as the state comptroller and the State Control Committee had led to NIS 40m. being returned to the state, he hoped the Histadrut would return NIS 400m. the pension funds had contributed to Hevrat Haovdim for what he said was no reason.

MK Yoram Lass (Labor) said in this regard that the government should return NIS 400m. to the health funds that it owes them for not passing on taxes paid to the Histadrut to help run the funds for 1990-92.

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ISRAEL DISCOUNT BANK

| ISRAEL MONEY MARKETS | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) (12.12.94) | | | | |
| Currency (deposit term) | 3 MONTHS | 6 MONTHS | 9 MONTHS | 12 MONTHS |
| U.S. dollar (\$250,000) | 5.825 | 6.125 | 6.375 | 6.625 |
| U.S. dollar (\$100,000) | 4.750 | 5.375 | 5.625 | 5.875 |
| German mark (DM 200,000) | 4.375 | 4.500 | 4.750 | 4.875 |
| Swiss franc (SF 200,000) | 5.125 | 5.375 | 5.625 | 5.875 |
| Yen (10 million yen) | 0.750 | 0.875 | 1.125 | 1.125 |
| Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (12.12.94) | | | | |
| Currency basket | Buy | Sell | Banknotes | Rep. |
| U.S. dollar | 3.3250 | 3.3720 | 2.54 | 3.3485 |
| U.S. dollar | 2.8800 | 3.3413 | 1.86 | 3.3220 |
| German mark | 1.8996 | 1.9224 | 1.86 | 1.9133 |
| French franc | 4.8844 | 4.7905 | 4.58 | 4.7113 |
| Japanese yen (100) | 0.5332 | 0.5610 | 0.53 | 0.5607 |
| Swiss franc | 2.9946 | 3.0367 | 2.94 | 3.0143 |
| Dutch guilder | 1.8978 | 1.7216 | 1.86 | 1.7094 |
| Swedish krona | 2.2992 | 2.2708 | 2.29 | 2.2958 |
| Norwegian krone | 0.3698 | 0.4044 | 0.36 | 0.4011 |
| Denmark krone | 0.4355 | 0.4426 | 0.43 | 0.4358 |
| Finnish mark | 0.4355 | 0.4426 | 0.43 | 0.4358 |
| Canadian dollar | 0.8113 | 0.8168 | 0.80 | 0.8170 |
| Australian dollar | 2.2312 | 2.2540 | 2.22 | 2.2577 |
| S. African rand | 0.5417 | 0.5876 | 0.54 | 0.5890 |
| Belgian franc (10) | 0.9245 | 0.9375 | 0.91 | 0.9278 |
| Austrian schilling (10) | 2.6972 | 2.7352 | 2.64 | 2.7108 |
| Italian lire (1000) | 1.8321 | 1.8580 | 1.79 | 1.8447 |
| Jordanian dinar | — | — | 4.17 | 4.2610 |
| Egyptian pound | — | — | 0.85 | 0.8567 |
| ECU | 3.6333 | 3.6945 | — | — |
| Spanish peseta (100) | 4.8005 | 4.8554 | 4.77 | 4.8288 |
| Spanish peseta (100) | 2.2702 | 2.3023 | 2.26 | 2.2948 |

* These rates vary according to bank. ** Bank of Israel.

SOURCE: BANK LEUM

Key Representative Rates

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| US dollar ... NIS 3.0220 | Change -0.03% |
| Sterling ... NIS 4.7113 | +0.05% |
| Mark ... NIS 1.9143 | +0.18% |

NEW YORK STOCK MARKETS

New York market indexes

| Index | Last | Change |
|----------------|---------|--------|
| DJ Industrial | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| DJ 30 | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| NYSE Composite | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| NYSE Midcap | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| NYSE Smallcap | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| S&P 500 | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| S&P 400 | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| S&P 600 | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| S&P 100 | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| S&P 200 | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| S&P 300 | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| S&P 400 | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| S&P 500 | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| S&P 600 | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| S&P 700 | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| S&P 800 | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| S&P 900 | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| S&P 1000 | 1281.67 | +23.89 |

NYSE stocks

| Stock | Last | Change |
|-------|---------|--------|
| Alcoa | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
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Other stock market indexes

| Index | Last | Change |
|----------|---------|--------|
| FTSE 100 | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| FTSE 100 | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| FTSE 100 | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
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Israeli stocks in NY

| Stock | Last | Change |
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| Alcoa | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
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Trade & Services

| Stock | Last | Change |
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| Alcoa | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
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Industrials

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Investment

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Oil Exploration

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Property, Building & Agriculture

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Financial Institutions

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Insurance

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LIBOR rates

| Rate | Last | Change |
|-----------|---------|--------|
| 3 months | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| 6 months | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| 9 months | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| 12 months | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| 3 months | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| 6 months | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
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| 3 months | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
| 6 months | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
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| 12 months | 1281.67 | +23.89 |

Foreign financial data courtesy of CommStock Trading Ltd.

US Commodities

| Commodity | Last | Change |
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ISRAEL DISCOUNT BANK

Source: COMMSTOCK TRADING LTD.

Multi-sided trading

| Stock | Last | Change |
|-------|---------|--------|
| Alcoa | 1281.67 | +23.89 |
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Two-sided trading

| Stock | Last | Change |
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Market pauses for breath

TEL AVIV STOCK MARKET

ANDRE LUMBROSO

Two-Sided Index: 171.46 (-0.75%)

Maof Index: 171.90 (-0.25%)

Karam Index: 149.27 (+0.87%)

The market paused yesterday, as if to catch its breath. The Two Sided declined by 0.75%, while the Maof was marked by steady trading and declined by only 0.24%. The Karam, apparently still flying in Sunday's heavy atmosphere, rose by 0.87%.

Total turnover returned to its usual low level at NIS 109.6 million, to which the Karam market contributed NIS 33m.

Traders had been waiting for the opening with mixed feelings, as everyone feared a major profit-taking wave.

While there was some profit-taking, the market weathered it easily. In fact, by the time trading was over, one could sense a feeling of relief that nothing drastic occurred among some traders.

The feeling that the capital gains tax was not going to be put into effect dissipated once it became clear that Finance Minister Avraham Shohat was sticking to his guns.

"The postponement/cancellation of the tax means a government crisis," one trader said. "Shohat would have to resign, unless he wants to make a fool of himself. In any case, the government would not look any better, and this would cost it the next election. There is a good chance that it will lose anyway, but at least it has a fighting chance now."

There was no clear direction to trading, as share prices seemed to be going up and down all the time, so that the indices were showing little change as declines and rises were averaging themselves out.

The ranges in which the securities traded tended to be narrow. Clal Israel was the most heavily traded, up 3.8% (price range 1.5%) on a turnover of NIS 6.5m.

Strickland leads Blazers past Kings

PORTLAND (Reuter) — Rod Strickland scored 24 points, including a driving layup with 36 seconds left that sealed a 93-88 victory for the Portland Trail Blazers against the Sacramento Kings in Sunday's only NBA game.

Strickland's layup came off a give-and-go with Clyde Drexler and helped the Blazers extend their homecourt mastery of the Kings, who came to Portland riding a four-game winning streak, to 22 games in a row.

Strickland added eight assists and eight rebounds and Drexler scored 17 points for the Blazers, who never trailed after taking a 6-4 lead.

Mitch Richmond and rookie Brian Grant scored 17 points apiece and Walt Williams added 10 for Sacramento. Richmond and Williams, the team's two leading scorers, were limited to a woeful 7-of-42 from the field.

But the Kings managed to keep the game close. A layup by Grant and a free throw by Richmond, who was a wretched 4-of-23 from the field, closed the deficit to 88-86 with 1:23 to go.

Buck Williams made a 16-foot shot for Portland and Walt Williams, who was 3-of-19 from the field, scored for the Kings before Strickland's layup provided a four-point lead.

Strickland and Drexler scored seven points apiece in the first quarter as Portland grabbed a 21-17 lead. A 10-footer by James Robinson opened the advantage to 31-21 with 8:37 left in the second period and the Blazers held a 51-43 halftime lead.

The Blazers led by as many as 14 points in the third quarter before the diminutive Spud Webb capped a 10-2 run with an 18-foot jumper that brought the Kings to 74-70 early in the final period.

EASTERN CONFERENCE

| Atlantic Division | | | | |
|-------------------|----|----|------|-----|
| | W | L | Pct. | GB |
| Orlando | 11 | 5 | .688 | — |
| New York | 10 | 6 | .625 | 3.5 |
| Boston | 9 | 7 | .562 | 7.5 |
| Washington | 8 | 8 | .500 | 7.5 |
| Philadelphia | 8 | 8 | .500 | 7.5 |
| New Jersey | 6 | 13 | .312 | 8.5 |
| Miami | 4 | 12 | .250 | 10 |

| Central Division | | | | |
|------------------|----|----|------|-----|
| | W | L | Pct. | GB |
| Indiana | 12 | 5 | .706 | — |
| Cleveland | 11 | 6 | .647 | 2 |
| Charlotte | 9 | 8 | .531 | 3.5 |
| Chicago | 9 | 9 | .500 | 4.5 |
| Detroit | 8 | 10 | .444 | 4.5 |
| Atlanta | 8 | 11 | .421 | 5 |
| Milwaukee | 6 | 12 | .333 | 6.5 |

| WESTERN CONFERENCE | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|------|-----|
| Midwest Division | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct. | GB |
| Houston | 12 | 6 | .667 | — |
| Denver | 11 | 6 | .647 | 1 |
| Utah | 10 | 8 | .556 | 1.5 |
| San Antonio | 8 | 9 | .471 | 3.5 |
| Minnesota | 3 | 15 | .167 | 9 |

| Pacific Division | | | | |
|------------------|----|----|------|------|
| | W | L | Pct. | GB |
| Phoenix | 13 | 5 | .722 | — |
| Seattle | 12 | 6 | .667 | 1 |
| LA Lakers | 11 | 7 | .611 | 2 |
| Portland | 9 | 7 | .563 | 3 |
| Sacramento | 10 | 6 | .556 | 3 |
| Golden State | 8 | 10 | .444 | 5 |
| LA Clippers | 2 | 17 | .105 | 11.5 |

NATIONAL BASKETBALL LEAGUE — Yesterday's results: **Houston** 88, **Mac** 81.

National Basketball League

| | W | L | Pct. |
|-----------------------|----|----|------|
| 1. Macomb Tel Aviv | 11 | 1 | .917 |
| 2. Macomb Flinton | 9 | 3 | .750 |
| 3. Hapoel Jerusalem | 8 | 4 | .667 |
| 4. Hapoel Eilat | 8 | 4 | .667 |
| 5. Hapoel Galil Elyon | 7 | 5 | .583 |
| 6. Hapoel Herzliya | 7 | 5 | .583 |
| 7. Hapoel Holon | 6 | 6 | .500 |
| 8. Macomb Jerusalem | 5 | 7 | .417 |
| 9. Macomb Ramat Gan | 5 | 7 | .417 |
| 10. Hapoel Haifa | 4 | 8 | .333 |
| 11. Hapoel Givat | 4 | 7 | .364 |
| 12. Hapoel Tel Aviv* | 4 | 7 | .364 |
| 13. Hapoel Giv'atim | 2 | 10 | .167 |
| 14. Hapoel Ramat Gan | 0 | 12 | .000 |

*Hapoel Tel Aviv has been penalized four points for financial irregularities.

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49ers win 9th straight behind Young



NEW YORK (AP) — Teams that warm up in December usually find themselves in the playoffs. And San Francisco, Pittsburgh and New England, along with the Raiders and Giants, are hot, hot, hot.

The 49ers (12-2), with Steve Young throwing two touchdown passes and Deion Sanders adding a 90-yard interception return for a score, won their ninth straight with a 38-15 victory over San Diego on Sunday.

The Steelers (11-3), with a 14-3 victory over Philadelphia, moved closer to the home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs with their sixth straight win.

The Patriots, Giants and Raiders, meanwhile, boosted their playoff hopes with victories. Even Tampa Bay got in on the act, winning its third straight for the first time in 12 years — but still getting knocked out of a postseason shot.

49ers 38, Chargers 15
Young was 25-for-32 for 304 yards and Jerry Rice had 12 catches for 144 yards as visiting San Francisco dominated despite San Francisco's throwing for 337 yards. One win in their last two games, against Denver or Minnesota, gives San Francisco the home-field advantage throughout the NFC playoffs.

During their winning streak, the 49ers have outscored the opposition 322-146.

"We are," said Young, "at the top of our game."

The Chargers failed to clinch the AFC West title for the second week in a row, losing last week to the Raiders.

Steelers 14, Eagles 3
Andre Hastings and John L. Williams scored TDs 1:48 apart in the fourth quarter to pace the Steelers, who next Sunday play Cleveland (10-4) for the AFC Central lead. The Browns, who beat Dallas on Saturday, clinched a playoff spot.

Pittsburgh's defense held Randall Cunningham to a career-low 59 yards passing (9 of 27) at Three Rivers Stadium.

Hastings caught an 18-yard TD pass from Neil O'Donnell 4:56 into the fourth quarter before Williams, subbing for the injured duo of Barry Foster and Bam Morris, scored from the 3.



THE RICE MAN COMETH — 49ers' wide receiver Jerry Rice (r) makes a catch for a first down as Chargers' Dwayne Harper tries to cover.

Patriots 28, Colts 13
Host New England (8-6) got two TD passes from Drew Bledsoe. The Pats will move into a first-place tie with Miami in the AFC East if the Dolphins lost to Kansas City last night.

Despite four interceptions, Bledsoe completed 25 of 45 passes for 277 yards to push the Pats closer to their first playoff berth since 1986, also the last time they won five in a row.

Ray Buchanan had his third interception return for a TD in five games, going 30 yards to stake the Colts (6-8) to a 10-0 lead. But Bledsoe came back with TD passes of 9 yards to Leroy Thompson and 6 yards to Ben Coates and Marion Butts scored from a yard out for a 21-10 lead.

Giants 27, Bengals 20
Rodney Hampton scored his second TD, from 3 yards with 40 seconds left, to lift host New York (7-7) to its fourth straight victory. The Giants probably have to win their final two games — against Philadelphia and Dallas — to make the playoffs.

The Giants snapped a four-game losing streak, but only after blowing a 10-point lead in the fourth quarter.

The Bengals (2-12) tied the score at 20 with 1:47 left on Doug Pelfrey's 30-yard field goal after Adrian Hardy blocked Mike Horan's punt. Before that, the Bengals' Jeff Blake hit Carl Pickens with a 3-yard TD pass to make it 20-17.

On the winning drive, Dave Brown completed three passes to the Bengals' 25 before Corey Sawyer was called for pass interference on Mike Sherrard at the 3. Hampton scored on the next play.

Raiders 23, Broncos 13
Los Angeles won its fourth game in the last five as Jeff Jaeger kicked a team-record five field goals. The victory moved the Raiders (8-6) a game behind the first-place-but-fading Chargers in the AFC West.

John Elway missed just his seventh game in 12 years because of an injury and it might have cost Denver a chance to make the playoffs.

Jeff Hostetler sealed the Raiders' win with a 5-yard TD pass to Harvey Williams with 5:59 left to give Los Angeles a 20-6 lead. The Raiders (8-6) have beaten the Broncos (7-7) five straight times, 11 of the last 12 and eight in a row at the Los Angeles Coliseum.

Elway has a strained muscle behind his left knee. Hugh Miller replaced Elway and was 20-for-33 for 242 yards, but couldn't produce a TD until it was too late.

Cardinals 17, Redskins 15
Greg Davis kicked a 27-yard field goal on the last play of the game to keep host Arizona (7-7) alive in the playoffs.

The Redskins (2-12) had taken a 15-14 lead with 2:54 left on Chip Lohmiller's third field goal, a 21-yarder.

Jay Schroeder, who had a 27-yard TD pass to Ricky Proehl in the first period, was 16 of 25 for 216 yards. Heath Shuler was 16 of 27 for 286 yards, including a 52-yard TD pass to Henry Ellard, who had eight catches for 191 yards.

Packers 40, Bears 3
Chicago (8-6) never had a chance as Brett Favre threw three TDs — two to Sterling Sharpe — Chris Jacke added four field goals and the Packers (7-7) won their ninth straight game at Lambeau Field.

The Bears lost their 14th straight December road game, a streak that dates to 1987.

Favre completed 19 of 31 passes for 250 yards and Edgar Bennett had 106 yards on 22 carries as the Packers snapped a three-game losing streak and kept their playoff hopes alive.

Vikings 21, Bills 17
Warren Moon (21 of 34 for 261 yards) finally won in Buffalo after six tries in 10 years as Minnesota (9-5) moved into sole possession of first-place in the AFC Central.

Fuad Rezaie had five field goals — 30, 38, 30, 25 and 22 yards — and Chris Carter caught nine passes for 111 yards to move within a catch of tying Sterling Sharpe's single-season NFL record of 112.

Jack Del Rio had an interception to kill one Buffalo drive and sacked Jim Kelly (sprained ligaments in his left knee) to stop another as the Bills fell to 7-7.

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No US visas to foreign players during baseball strike

RYE BROOK, NY (AP) — Foreign players hoping to replace striking Major League baseball players will not be granted visas by the US government, union officials said Sunday.

The players strike was officially certified by the US Labor Department last Thursday, meaning immigration officials will protect the union by barring any foreign players entering the US to work as replacement players.

Management said the move could backfire on the players. Even those foreign players on team rosters when the strike began last August 12 will be unable to obtain a work visa until there is a settlement.

Management negotiator John Harrington has said teams will start the season with replacement players if the strike continues into the spring. The Toronto Blue Jays are barred from using replacement players in the SkyDome because of Ontario law preventing the use of such workers.

Meanwhile, owners made a new proposal to players, moving away from their plan for an escalating tax on payrolls and countering with a flat tax.

Players initially rejected the proposal but said they needed more time to study it.

"It appears to be all the elements of a cap," Union head Donald Fehr said.

The owners' counterproposal came one day after the union presented a plan calling for a 5.62 percent payroll tax. In the owners' previous proposal of November 17, they called for an escalating tax on payrolls that were more than 12% above the average — a tax that could have gone as high as 77% in 1994.

Earlier Sunday, management's bargainers met among themselves for five hours in the morning, then met with union officials and players for about 90 minutes. The owners spent the early evening in another caucus, then presented the counterproposal.

England cricketers plagued by injury for World Series

MELBOURNE (AP) — John Crawley and Darren Gough both will face pre-match fitness tests to determine whether they can play for England against Australia A in a World Series limited-overs match today at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

The injured pair will be put through morning fitness tests before England finalizes its team for the crucial day-night game.

Lancashire batsman Crawley is recovering from a torn calf muscle, while Yorkshire fast bowler Gough is struggling to overcome a hamstring injury.

Fast bowler Joey Benjamin already has been ruled out with chicken pox.

"We'll leave all our decisions until just before start of play," said England manager Keith Fletcher.

England has a 0-1 tournament record going into the match, while the second-string Australia A squad has a 2-1 mark.

Mike Atherton's tourists suffered two weekend losses against the Australian Institute of Sport Cricket Academy team of young players in Sydney — results that sparked angry headlines back home.

Fletcher said his players were "ashamed" after losing their second match to the Academy XI inside 24 hours.

"We've simply got to get it right," he said.

England captain Atherton said yesterday that he is happy with morale within the squad.

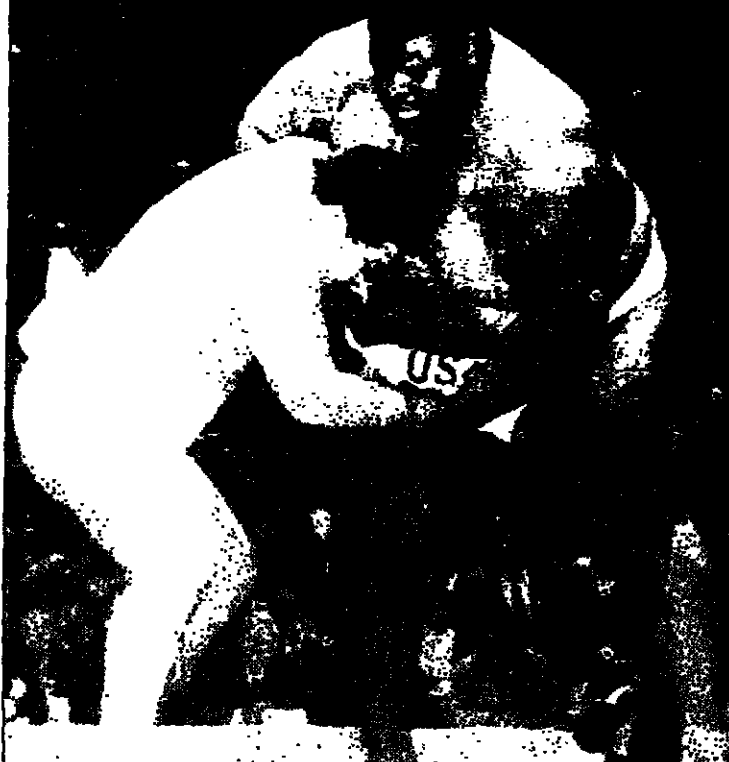
"We didn't play very well, but it's not the end of the world," he said. "I'm sure we'll come back."

Australia A is expected to field the same side that came within six runs of beating Australia at the Adelaide Oval on Sunday.

ENGLAND: Mike Atherton, Alec Stewart, Graeme Hick, Graham Thorpe, John Crawley, Graham Gooch, Craig White, Steve Rhodes, Phil DeFreitas, Angus Fraser, Sham Udal, Phil Tufnell, Devon Malcolm, Darren Gough.

AUSTRALIA A: Darren Lehmann, Matthew Hayden, Damien Martyn, Justin Langer, Ricky Ponting, Tom Moody, Phil Emery, Gavin Robertson, Paul Reiffel, Greg Rowell, Merv Hughes, Jo Angel.

Little Big Man



Mongolia's Badmaanyambuu Baterneda, a mere 275-pounder (125 kg), whips 528-pound (240 kg) American Emanuel Yarbrough in the openweight division of the Third Sumo World Championships in Tokyo on Sunday.

Romanians ready for battle

ROMANIA'S national soccer team arrived in Israel yesterday to prepare for tomorrow night's Group 1 qualifier in the European Nations' Competition. Last night the team trained at the National Stadium, Ramat Gan.

Romanian coach Anghel Iordanescu is also the youngest general in his country's armed forces. On this occasion, the squad under his command is being readied for combat against Israel in the battle for top place in the qualifying group. Both sides have seven points with the Romanians ahead on goal difference.

One of the star pieces of ammunition in Iordanescu's formidable armory, captain Gheorghe Hagi, returned to the field in Barcelona's colors on Sunday, after a five week layoff due to injury.

Hagi, rated as one of the top three players in the World Cup, capped a brilliant performance with a goal that should have set Israel's warning bells ringing. In the 90th minute, he embedded the ball into the Celta Vigo's net with a shot delivered from over 50 meters.

While their captain's return to form will provide a boost for the Romanians, Iordanescu's squad is not in a complacent mood. Yesterday, Tottenham striker Hie Dumitrescu stressed the importance of avoiding a loss, while Sheffield Wednesday's Dan Petrescu showed respect for his hosts. "I know that Israel can play well and it won't be an easy match. The Israelis can play fast attacking football."

In the other Group 1 meeting, France takes on Azerbaijan at home today. The French have registered a disappointing start to their qualifying campaign and have not yet scored a goal.

In other action today, Israel's under-21 Olympic side takes on its Romanian counterparts at Bloomfield. Israel coach Yitzhak Shum has a full complement of players available and will be hoping that Njewan Grayeb can find the magic touch in front of goal that he displayed in the recent friendly against Cyprus.

The match kicks off at 4.45 pm.

Arsenal manager denies receiving cash gift

LONDON (AP) — Arsenal manager George Graham denied newspaper allegations on Sunday that he received a £285,000 gift after the club agreed to buy a Danish soccer star.

According to the Mail on Sunday, the money was paid to Graham by a Norwegian soccer agent after Arsenal agreed to pay £1.57m for Danish midfielder John Jensen.

If the allegations are true, Graham could be heavily fined by the FA and suspended from soccer duties for breaching the FA's regulations.

But Graham, who has been in charge of European Cup Winners Cup holder Arsenal since 1986, denied receiving any gifts.

The Jensen transfer is one of several involving Scandinavian players that are being investigated by Britain's tax authorities.

Other deals reportedly being investigated by the Inland Revenue involve Manchester United's Danish goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel, Liverpool's signing of Denmark's Torben Piechnik and Oldham's capture of internationally sought-after Norwegian international Gunnar Halle.

Soccer player suspended for tooting his horn

LONDON (Reuter) — Liam Daish, captain of English Second Division soccer club Birmingham City, has been handed a two-match suspension — for celebrating a goal with an on-field trumpet rendition.

Daish started playing a trumpet thrown to him by a fan after a teammate's goal in the club's 4-0 win at Chester on Saturday.

But his Louis Armstrong-style impersonation earned him a booking and took him past the disciplinary points limit that incurs suspension.

"I know the referee has directives to adhere to, but to get banned through being booked for that seems a bit harsh."

Chinese swimmers banned for 2 years

LAUSANNE (AP) — Five Chinese swimmers who tested positive for banned substances at the Asian Games were suspended for two years yesterday by the international swimming federation.

Four male swimmers, including quadruple Asian Games champion Xiang Guoming, and female World Championship gold medalist Zhou Guanbin were suspended by FINA to back the two-year bans already handed down by the Chinese federation.

The five were among 11 Chinese athletes, including seven swimmers, who tested positive for dehydrocorticosterone at the October games in Japan. The other two swimmers, world champions Lu Bin and Yang Aihua, have already received two-year bans for failing out-of-competition tests conducted before the games.

FINA also said it has requested that the Chinese federation conduct an investigation to determine if any coaches, trainers or doctors were responsible for the spate of positive tests.

The Sports Pages are edited by Joe Hoffman

Nat'l Health Insurance Law clears last hurdle

THE National Health Insurance Law passed its final hurdle yesterday, when the Knesset passed an amendment calling for its implementation on January 1.

An attempt by MK Rafi Eilul (Labor) to postpone implementation by two months on the grounds that the "responsible authorities are not yet prepared" fumbled out, and the law was endorsed 35-3, with five abstentions.

The Likud strongly supported the original law and backs its immediate implementation. Its MKs stayed away from the plenum in droves rather than vote for a government bill.

The amendment effectively severed the last link between the health tax and the Histadrut. Under the ongoing system, the Histadrut collected the health tax for Kupat Holim Clalit, which it

DAN IZENBERG

owns, and siphoned off a portion for its own needs.

When the National Health Insurance Law, which severs the link between the health tax and the Histadrut, was passed several months ago, the Knesset postponed its implementation until an alternative source of funding for the Histadrut could be found.

Originally, the coalition hoped to pass a law obliging workers to pay a tax to their unions. The idea was finally dropped after legal experts said such a law would be unconstitutional.

Labor and Social Affairs Committee chairman Yossi Katz said the Histadrut also asked the coalition to implement the law immediately.

It is seeking to solve its funding problems in negotiations with the

government and private sector employers on a package deal.

One of the problems raised by Eilul over the past week was the high health tax the poor would have to pay. However, Katz said he would be presenting another amendment to the bill next week to solve the problem.

According to the amendment, recipients of National Insurance Institute or Defense Ministry stipends who receive supplementary income payments will pay NIS 47 a month for health insurance. Those who do not require supplementary income payments will pay NIS 88 a month.

Those who receive NII or Defense Ministry stipends and also work, will have their health tax calculated according to their income from work only.

Those who do not work will pay NIS 47.



Relatives of Hanna Szenes lay wreaths on her grave at Jerusalem's Mt. Herzl Military Cemetery yesterday to mark the 50th anniversary of her parachuting behind Nazi lines and execution by Hungarian fascists. (Eli Natan)

Doctors to interrupt service today in protest of health care changes

JUDY SIEGEL

DOCTORS in all public hospitals will attend "information assemblies" today at the initiative of the Israel Medical Association, which charges the Health Ministry with planning changes that "will bring disaster" upon the health system.

Between noon and 2 p.m., the assemblies will cause disruption in all public hospitals, as doctors treat only emergency cases.

The IMA claims that Health Minister Ephraim Sneh and his director-general, Prof. Mordechai Shani, intend to squeeze the hospitals by setting quotas for the number of medical procedures that may be carried out each year.

Reduced budgets, limits on activity, and setting "unrealistic rates" for treatment of patients in internal-medicine departments will turn the clock back on the hospital system and lengthen the queues for treatment, the IMA says.

Although the office of Health Ministry spokeswoman Yifat Ben-Hai received a three-page fax of the IMA's contentions at 8 a.m. yesterday, no comment was available from her by last night.

The IMA, which represents more than 12,000 of the country's physicians, has sent letters to all of them warning of the effects of the ministry's new policies. It

charged that the number of beds in various hospital departments will be cut.

"A hospital will receive NIS 5,000 for each patient treated in an internal-medicine department [these mainly treat elderly patients with acute or chronic illnesses], with no connection to the length of their hospitalization or the type of treatment," the IMA said in a statement. "If the patient returns to the department two weeks later, the care will come at the hospital's expense [without reimbursement by his health fund]."

The IMA also charged that day hospital facilities will be limited to only 250 patients per bed per year, compared with 600 to 700 patients annually today.

A visit to the emergency room will bear a maximum payment of NIS 260, allowing only minimal diagnostic techniques, the IMA claims.

The number of beds in other major departments, including surgery, will be cut. The IMA added that funds for medical research will be cut drastically.

The IMA maintains that this situation would bring about the "collapse" of the hospital system, and put doctors in the position of having to put financial considerations before the needs of their patients.

Law Committee debates High Court role

HERB KEINON

THE High Court of Justice must realize that Israel is a Jewish democracy, not just a democracy, Shlomo Benizri (Shas) said yesterday, as the Knesset Law Committee began discussing whether the court's authority should be limited.

Benizri, along with Yigal Bibi (National Religious Party), is in the process of forming a lobby that will seek to limit the court's powers and work to prevent Justice Aharon Barak from becoming its president.

Benizri lashed out at committee chairman Dedi Zucker (Meretz), who was recently quoted in the press as saying the move was put forward by "unenlightened MKs."

"Don't call me primitive and vulgar," Benizri said. "Does everyone who doesn't agree with you automatically live in the Dark Ages? If that's the case, I will happily be primitive with my value system rooted in Judaism, and you can be enlightened with your values and the homosexual law."

Benizri's and Bibi's lobby was spurred by the court's precedent-setting ruling earlier this month that companies must give the same benefits to a homosexual employee's live-in partner as to a heterosexual's.

Yitzhak Levy (NRP) said what bothered him was the court's super-activism. He said this decision took legislative prerogative away from the Knesset, and the legal status of couples should be

Dayan seeks to determine roles of Knesset, judiciary

DAN IZENBERG

COALITION faction chairman Eli Dayan yesterday held an unscheduled and unprecedented meeting of the leaders of all the parliamentary factions to discuss the strained relations between the Knesset and the High Court.

Dayan said he wanted to see if it is possible to determine the prerogatives of the legislature and the judiciary, so that "the courts would get their due and the Knesset its. Otherwise, I fear there may be a head-on confrontation."

During the discussion, Meretz, Tsomet, and Mokedet teamed up to defend the court from the onslaughts of Labor, the Likud, and the religious parties.

Dayan said that, in light of the "judicial upheaval" caused by the passage of two human rights laws in 1992, "maybe it is time for a 'parliamentary upheaval' in which the system of electing judges should be reconsidered."

determined by the Knesset.

Although the homosexual issue was one of the pegs of the debate, the committee dealt with the larger issue of the role of the court.

Levy, along with Zucker and Dan Meridor (Likud), are suggesting that for the court to invalidate a law, it must sit in an expanded panel which includes most, if not all, of the justices.

Knesset Speaker Shevah Weiss said he is happy the court has taken upon itself, like the US Supreme Court, to determine the legality of laws passed by the Knesset. Subtly criticizing Benizri and Bibi, he said that although he believes criticism of

the court is a legitimate part of democracy, "it is necessary to preserve the honor of the court, and the honor of each of the justices."

Meridor said the criticism of the court is misdirected, and that complaints should be directed at the Knesset, which gave the court its authority. "We are the ones who created the legal revolution," he said.

Eli Goldschmidt, the only Labor MK at the meeting, said he favors some kind of dialogue between the justices and the MKs, so each side can understand the other. This idea was roundly criticized by Benny Begin (Likud),

who said those who want to understand the world view of the justices need only read their decisions.

Tzahi Hanegbi (Likud) said he is amazed that some members of the opposition are leading the campaign against the activism of the court, which serves as an important check on the government.

"The criticism of the court is exaggerated," he said. "The court rules according to each issue, and in the case of the homosexuals, provided a solution to a legitimate grievance from a segment of the population."

Rabbinical Council scores court for upholding gay rights

HERB KEINON

THE Chief Rabbinical Council yesterday sharply criticized the High Court of Justice for its decision, earlier this month, forcing companies to give the same benefits to homosexual couples as to heterosexual ones.

"The Chief Rabbinical Council is deeply shocked and views with extreme gravity the recent majority decision of the Supreme Court, sitting as the High Court of Justice, on the issue of defining a couple," the council's statement read.

"The decision provides a dangerous opening toward giving legitimization to a way of life defined in the Torah as an abomination."

The rabbis said the court's decision "uproots" the central place of the family in Israel and undermines Jewish morality as expressed in the Torah and in Jewish tradition throughout the generations.

The council called on the Knesset to pass a law to clarify the status of a couple and clearly define, "in the spirit of the Torah," who is entitled to inheritances, pensions, and other social benefits.

This is the second time this year the Chief Rabbinical Council, the body that sets policy for the Chief Rabbinate, has issued a statement highly critical of a High Court decision.

In February the rabbis took the court to task for ruling that religious courts must apply civil law, not Halacha, in property disputes between divorcing spouses.

'Transfer of funds to Palestinians must be legislated'

ATTORNEY-GENERAL Michael Ben-Yair yesterday decided to order a delay in the transfer of NIS 1 million in income tax funds to the Palestinian Authority.

His decision followed a request by Likud MK Michael Eitan to check transaction's legal basis.

Ben-Yair concluded that while the transfer was covered under the Gaza/Jericho Accord, it must be enacted into Israeli law. *Jim*

Panel: Give journalists partial immunity

LIAT COLLINS

JOURNALISTS should not be forced to reveal sources unless it is to prevent a serious crime or miscarriage of justice, according to the recommendations of a committee established to study the issue of journalistic immunity.

The committee, chaired by Tel Aviv University's Dr. Asher Maoz, presented its report and recommendations for legislation to Police Minister Moshe Shahal and Justice Minister David Liba'i yesterday.

The two ministers said they

would consider the report, but have reservations about creating legislation which could be interpreted as interfering with the freedom of the press, including the means by which journalists obtain information.

The committee - comprising journalists, lawyers, and police representatives - was divided on whether the press should receive complete or only partial immunity.

The majority opted for the

latter.

The panel was appointed in March 1993 following the arrest of *Ma'ariv* crime reporter Gideon Meron for refusing to divulge the source of a leak.

Maoz noted that, at present, the question of journalistic immunity is open to the interpretation of the courts, and said the police are uncertain of its limits. Legislation would clarify and protect the procedure which exists de facto, he said.

Liba'i, however, said: "Better a good law than an open field, but better an open field than a bad law."

He said he would weigh the matter in terms of freedom of the press against the risk that criminals could manipulate or hide behind journalists.

Lawyer Moshe Ronen said if the information forwarded to journalists off-the-record turns out to be false, the journalists would be freed of their obligation to protect the source who misled them.

Beduin illegally return to lands

MORE than 800 Beduin from the Azzama tribe yesterday illegally returned to lands they were removed from more than four years ago near Moshav Asbalim in the Negev.

The Beduin had been forced to leave by the Agriculture Ministry's Green Patrol and were moved to the Ramat Hovav region near Beersheba, after it was claimed they were living in a military zone.

After being moved, the Beduin discovered that plans for the area called for it to be used for agricultural and not military needs. They subsequently gathered their 110 families and some 8,000 sheep and returned to the land they claim is theirs. *Jim*

Court asked to halt Rabin from using funds for polls

LIKUD MK Tzahi Hanegbi yesterday petitioned the High Court of Justice for an injunction against Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's use of state funds to conduct opinion polls.

Hanegbi asked the court to instruct Rabin to stop ordering the polls on political issues and on approval of government ministers.

The petition also demands Rabin stop using government funds to finance the salary of his special adviser on public opinion polls.

Hanegbi also asked the court to order Rabin to publish exact figures on the number of polls conducted through his office and their cost. *(Jim)*

KNESSET BRIEFS

Yemenite children inquiry mooted

The Knesset Internal Affairs and Environment Committee yesterday agreed to prepare a bill for first reading calling for the establishment of a commission of inquiry into the alleged disappearance of Yemenite children in the 1950s. The bill will be based on private members' bills approved in preliminary reading last week. The bills were submitted by Eliezer Zandberg (Tsomet), David Mena (Likud) and Avigdor Kahalani (Labor).

Closed plenary sessions banned

The Knesset will no longer have the right to hold closed-door plenary sessions according to a proposal by Haggaal Meron (Labor) which was passed into law by a vote of 14-0. Until now, the Basic Law: Knesset provided for such a possibility and the Knesset resorted to it once.

2 MKs punished for income law violations

Rafi Edri (Labor) was docked half a month's pay and Taleb a-Sanaa one week for violations of the law regarding MKs' earnings. Edri was fined for earning more in outside income than the law allows, while a-Sanaa was fined for submitting his report a month late.

MK lawyers can't bring up cases in Knesset

The Knesset Ethics Committee ruled that MKs who are lawyers and represent clients in legal proceedings must not raise their clients' cases in the Knesset. The committee was asked to rule on a complaint by the Amitai organization, which accused MK David Mena of a conflict of interests for representing two men suspected of belonging to an underground organization and defending their cause in a plenum speech.

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